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India rejoices at Chanu's feat

21-year-long wait for weightlifting medal at Olympics ends



Mirabai Chanu reacts during a successful attempt in the 49 kg category of Womens Weightlifting event of the Summer Olympics 2020 in Tokyo on Saturday

PTI

PTI ■ TOKYO

A confident smile never leaving her face, Mirabai Chanu ended India's over two-decade long wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics, clinching the 49kg category silver medal five years after leaving the same platform in tears following a disastrous

debut.

With her historic triumph, she ensured that India was second on the medals tally for a brief while, a feat that has never been achieved before by the country. It was also the first time that India managed to win a medal on the opening day competitions.

The diminutive iron lady

from Manipur lifted a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg) to better Karnam Malleswari's bronze in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. With this, she exorcised the ghosts of the 2016 Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift, leaving her shattered.

"I am very happy, I have been dreaming of this for the

past five years. I am very proud of myself right now. I did try for gold but even silver is a great achievement for me," Chanu told reporters after her career-defining triumph for which she had been training in the US for past few months.

The 2016 experience was a watershed in her career and Chanu had spoken about how

Mother in tears as Mirabai sports 'good luck' earrings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A historic silver medal and a radiant smile were not the only eye-catching things about Mirabai Chanu on Saturday, her gold earrings shaped like Olympic rings were as striking, a gift from her mother who sold her own jewellery for them five years ago.

The hope was that the earrings would bring her 'good luck'. It didn't happen in the Rio 2016 Games but Chanu made the little sacrifice count in Tokyo this morning with a

silver medal and Saikhom Ongbi Tombi Leima has struggled to stop her tears from flowing ever since.

"I saw the earrings on TV, I gave them to her in 2016 before the (Rio) Olympics. I have made it for her from the gold pieces and savings I have so that it brings luck and success," Leima told PTI from her home in Manipur where a considerable number of relatives, friends and well-wishers gathered to watch Chnau script history in Tokyo.

confused she had felt during her debut at the biggest stage.

There was none of those nerves to be seen on Saturday, just a very composed and focussed athlete who knew she was destined for the podium.

"I am very happy to win the first medal for India at these Games. I don't just belong to Manipur, I belong to the whole country," she said in response to a query on what it meant for her as a Manipuri.

"I would like to thank my coach Vijay Sharma and the support staff for their continuous hard work, motivation and training," she added.

Could not have asked for a happier start to Tokyo2020! India is elated by Mirabai Chanu's stupendous performance. Congratulations to her for winning the Silver medal in weightlifting. Her success motivates every Indian

Heartiest congratulations to Mirabai Chanu for starting the medal tally for India in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 by winning silver medal

Better safe than sorry: Embassy to Indians in Af

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As fighting rages in Afghanistan, the Indian embassy there on Saturday said the situation "remains dangerous" and advised all Indian nationals there to exercise caution.

The advisory came days after the IAF planes evacuated more than 50 diplomatic staff of the Indian consulate in Kandhar.

The note of caution by the embassy in Kabul on Saturday urged Indians staying, visiting, and working in Afghanistan to exercise utmost vigilance at all times and avoid all non-essential travel as security situation in Afghanistan remains dangerous. It also warned Indian nationals are not exceptions, and they additionally face a serious threat of kidnapping.

The detailed advisory also asked the Indian nationals to remain vigilant with security at workplace, place of residence and also during movement to their places of work. It is recommended that all types of non-essential movements be avoided. Movements especially during peak commuting hours should also be avoided. While traveling on roads, maintain distance from possible targets like military con-

'Avoid travel as Af situation dangerous'



voys, official vehicles of Government and Ministries, high ranking officials, law enforcement agencies, it cautioned.

Indians were also asked to refrain from going to crowded markets, shopping complexes, restaurants and other public places. All essential movement may please be kept as discrete as possible, it said.

It also advised traveling outside the main cities should be strictly avoided.

Moreover, all Indian nationals arriving in Afghanistan are advised to register with the Embassy.

Hyder shot dead trying to flee from custody

WAS BEING SHIFTED FROM CHOUDWAR TO BARIPADA JAIL
TRIED TO SNATCH GUN, FLEE: POLICE COMMISSIONER

PNS ■ CUTTACK/ BALESWAR

Dreaded gangster Shiekh Hyder was shot dead by police when he allegedly tried to flee from police custody while being shifted from the Choudwar jail to the Baripada jail on Saturday afternoon.

Hyder succumbed to bullet injuries at a hospital in Baleswar.

Twin City Commissioner of Police Soumendra Priyadarshi said Hyder had sustained injury from a solitary bullet fired at him by an escort staff in self-defence when the gangster tried to snatch away the SLR from one of the police personnel in a bid to flee.

The police personnel warned Haider, but he turned a deaf ear to the warnings following which police were forced to resort to controlled firing to prevent him from escaping, Priyadarshi said.

Police sources said Hyder had suffered critical injuries in the firing around 3.20 pm when he tried to flee from a jail van while being taken to a jail in Baripada. The team had left with the gangster from Choudwar jail at around 10 am



on the day.

A Sub-Inspector had fired at Hyder when the latter tried to flee by attempting to snatch the weapon of a guard in the escort team.

Police said Haider asked the escort team to stop the van as he wanted to attend nature's call. However, soon after stepping down from the vehicle, the gangster tried to escape and, in the process, tried to snatch a firearm from one of the security personnel.

Hyder had tested positive for Covid following his arrest in the dramatic escape from the

SCB Medical College in Cuttack in April 2021. The Odisha police managed to nab the fleeing gangster from Hyderabad.

The police decided to shift the gangster to Baripada following the police ascertained that he was back to his old ways and was trying to revive his crime syndicate, while being in jail.

Haider, who started his criminal career in the nineties, came to limelight following him and his gang members eliminated his arch rival Suleman's brother Chunna in Bhubaneswar.

He was also involved in the kidnapping and murder of mines owner Rashmi Ranjan, which had created a sensation in the State. He was sentenced to life in both the cases to undergo life imprisonment.

He was wanted in more than 15 cases in Kendrapada, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Puri, Nayagarh and Balangir. He was infamous for being involved in murder, extortion and tender fixing.

Though he was in jail, he managed to run his criminal network from jail, which gave sleepless nights to police.

From rickshaw puller to dreaded don

Hyder had rags-to-riches story

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

The notorious Sheikh Hyder, who let loose a reign of terror in Odisha for almost more than a decade from 1995 to 2005, had rags-to-riches story in the sense that he was pulling rickshaw before making his entry into the underworld.

Hyder's crime records date back to nearly three decades. In early 90s, he had allegedly started his anti social activities as the henchman of deceased Rabin, who was a dreaded criminal.

Hyder's notoriety had spread overnight after he shot dead criminal Bula Sethi on the Kendrapada court premises in 1991. He was injured in an encounter with police in 1997.

Initially till the early nineties, Hyder and Suleman Malik alias Suleman were a part of the gang led by Tito. But subsequently they either joined hands or parted ways over establishing hegemony over one another, besides due to quarrelling over booty share. This led to a series of gang wars.

Hyder and Tito used to single out

corrupt officers and unscrupulous contractors and traders. They used to force them to pay hafta or protection money.

Political patronage and funding had also allegedly emboldened the gangs as they were reportedly used during election campaigns for the political leaders in past years. They allegedly used to indulge in bank robberies, dacoities and contract killing but their regular source of income was said to be generated from the hafta.

Tito, in 2005, joined hands with his arch rival Hyder and later Hyder-Tito jointly switched over to tender fixing by terrorising the contractors in and outside the districts.

In May 2005, Hyder's men shot dead Sulaiman's younger brother Sheikh Chuna near the Stewart School in Bhubaneswar. Hyder was arrested and put in jail in this case. In March 2011, he was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment. Hyder was also named as an accused in Sulaiman's murder case, but he was acquitted.

Hyder led his gang from inside Bhubaneswar jail. He masterminded the abduction of Keonjhar mining businessman Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra and his driver with Rs 2 crore ransom demand in Bhubaneswar in May 2007. They killed Mohapatra and his driver.

'Police killed my husband; encounter false'

Says gangster's wife Hasina



PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

Hyder's wife Hasina Biwi blamed police for 'killing' her husband. "Police are responsible for my husband's death," she told reporters.

"Mardine mere marad ko police bale achanak uthake leke jail se leke mardin (police killed my husband by taking him from jail). Encounter per ko hota hai kalije ko nehi (encounter firing generally made to leg not to chest). Lungi pehanake le gaye hand cuff pakake, bole bhag jata tha purari puri jhoot police wale boltine (police took him wearing a lungi and told he was fleeing; totally false)," stated Hasina.

"It's a fake encounter made by police with an intention to kill my husband by scripting a false and fabricated story. I will knock at the doors of the State Government and court to get justice," she added.

"How did my husband, who was in handcuffs, manage to take possession of the arms of police personnel? Why did not he open fire at police?" questioned Hasina.

"I demand to hand over the body of my husband to my family," stated she.

Meanwhile, police personnel were deployed near Hyder's house to maintain law and order.

Massive evacuation in rain-ravaged Maha

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than 89,000 people were evacuated from the rain-ravaged coastal Konkan region and several parts of western Maharashtra as multiple agencies continued rescue and relief operations in the flood-affected areas of the State on Saturday.

Despite a let-up in the rain in most parts of the State, large parts of western Maharashtra districts of Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur remained thick sheets of floodwater, while the towns of Chiplun, Khed in Ratnagiri district and other areas in coastal Konkan region continued to reel under inundation.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited Talai village in Mahad taluka of Raigad district where more than 50 people were killed in a massive landslide on Friday. He assured the affected people that the State Government would, apart from giving compensation to the affected families, undertake rehabilitation of the displaced people across the coastal Konkan region and other parts of the State.

As many as 89,333 people were rendered homeless as they were evacuated in various flood-affected districts of coastal Konkan region and several parts of Western Maharashtra.

Sangli district in western Maharashtra bore maximum brunt of the flood situation arising from the heavy rain battering the region for the past four days.

While 40,573 people have been evacuated to safer places in Sangli district, the neighbouring Kolhapur district accounted for the evacuation of 40,882 people. As many as 2,681 marooned people were shifted to safer places in Thane district, there were evacuation of people in other districts like Ratnagiri (1200), Raigad (1000), Satara (734) and Pune (263).

Due to heavy rainfall in the district and heavy discharge from the Koyna dam, rivers in the district, including the Panchganga breached the danger mark and contributed to inundation in many areas in Sangli and Kolhapur districts. On its part, the district administration evacuated people from low-lying areas with help of NDRF and local teams.

State adds 1,864 new Covid +ves, 68 deaths

MAX 496 +VE CASES, 30 FATALITIES IN KHORDHA
STATE'S TOTAL DEATH TOLL MOUNTS TO 5,445

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State on Saturday registered 1,864 Covid-19 positive cases in the 30 districts and the State pool, with which the total tally increased to 9,65,715.

A total of 74,707 samples were tested in the last 24 hours.

Out of the new cases, 1,082 were from quarantine and 782 local contacts. The active cases in the State stood at 19,013.

Khordha district reported the day's highest 486 cases followed by Cuttack with 221, Baleswar 114 and Jaipur 107.

The districts which reported below-100 cases were Jagatsinghpur with 89, Dhenkanal 84, Angul 69, Nayagarh 66, Bhadrak 65, Kendrapada and Puri 59 each, Sundargarh 56, Keonjhar 44, Sambalpur 34, Bargarh and Rayagada 24 each, Kandhamal 16,

Ganjam and Malkangiri 12 each, Nuapada nine, Jharsuguda eight, Kalahandi and Koraput seven each, Deogarh and Subarnapur six each, Balangir five, Boudh and Gajapati three each and Nabarangpur two. Besides, 100 cases were reported from the State pool.

Meanwhile, another 68 patients succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours, with which the total death toll surged to 5,445, the Health and Family Welfare Department said.

The maximum 30 deaths were reported from Khordha district followed by Puri with 11, Angul eight, Mayurbhanj seven, Keonjhar six and Ganjam, Jagatsinghpur, Kandhamal, Malkangiri, Nuapada and Sundergarh one each. So far, 9,39,160 patients have recovered in the State.

BBSR reports 163 new infections

1,863 ACTIVE CASES

25 MORE DIE;

116 RECOVER

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Bhubaneswar on Saturday registered a comparatively low of 163 new Covid-19 positive cases. With this, the total positives' tally in the city rose to 97,695.

Out of the new cases, 163 were local contacts and 44 quarantine cases.

The local contacts included eight cases each in Patia and Khandagiri and seven each in Saheed Nagar and Nayapalli.

The active cases stood at 1,863 in the city.

Meanwhile, 25 more patients succumbed to the disease in the city, with which the total death toll mounted to 736.

However, 116 persons recovered on the day, increasing the total recoveries to 95,075.

Congress questions school opening move

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

While welcoming the State Government's decision to start classroom teaching for the students of Classes-X and XII, the Congress on Saturday feared that while a majority section of teaching and nonteaching staffs have not been vaccinated against Covid, the children may not be safe.

Party State spokesperson Sudarsan Das and NSUI State president Yashir Nawaj said that when 60% of the school staffs are vaccinated with the first dose and 40% with the second dose, full protection from the virus is not possible.

In the matter of online education, they said the Schools and Mass Education Minister himself has admitted that still only 32% students are availing online education.



The internet reach is very low in the State. So, it is not possible to provide online teaching for every student.

Das said the Government's move for merger of schools is a hoax. The Government has already merged 7,000 schools out of a targeted 14,000 schools. This is not merger; rather, it's closure of schools and this decision goes against the Right to Education Act.

CBI raids 40 locations in fake arms licence case

PNS ■ JAMMU

The CBI on Saturday conducted searches at around 40 locations in Srinagar, Jammu, Udhampur, Rajouri, Anantnag, Baramulla and Delhi, including the premises of two IAS officers, in the on-going investigation of a case related to arms licence racket.

The CBI teams searched the premises of around 20 gun dealers and other public servants from early morning across multiple locations.

Some officials in connivance with gun dealers were involved in the issuance of more than 2.78 lakh arms licences to the non-entitled persons.

The CBI collected documents about the issuance of these arms licences allegedly spread over 22 districts of J&K.

‘Playing an asura came with challenges’

SIDDHARTH NIGAM, who plays a 2500-year-old asura in Hero-Gayab Mode On on Sony SAB, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about his reaction on getting this role and challenges faced

■What was your reaction when you were offered to play a 2500-year-old asura?

When I was approached for the project, I was not told what character I was being offered. I was only given the brief. They told me that they already had their main lead. And now they were looking for a person who was more powerful than this superhero — someone who can make the hero a superhero. I was interested. I felt that the show was unique. I have always tried to do projects where I could be different from what I had done in the past. When I was offered this role, I was excited. However, when I was told that I would be an *asura*, I was taken aback a bit but I was told that I would remain in my human form; just that I would have superhuman powers. The best part was that I would get to be part of the project with my brother.

■How did you come on board the project?

I was lucky that I didn't have to audition for this project. The producer of Peninsula Pictures, Alind Srivastava offered me this role. He said that he wanted me to be part of this show and play Shivaay. I agreed and here I am.

■What are the challenges that come with playing Shivaay?

There were quite a few. First, Shivaay's voice is a bit heavy. I am unlike Veer Nanda (Hero) who is street-smart. I am all-powerful and strong. Then there is the look. I have tattoos and initially it would take up to two hours to get ready. Now, of course, it doesn't take that long. Also, the dialogue delivery is different; he is extremely intelligent. Whatever he says has deeper meaning. How this has to be conveyed had to be practiced.

■Do you get into fights with your brother — off-screen?

Onscreen, I am obviously trying to turn him into a superhero, so there are fight sequences. Off-screen, sometimes we have differences of opinion and get into verbal fights, as is normal. We sometimes end up in a WWE kind of situation. But we are brothers and respect each other. The good part is that we have no

ego clashes.

■How did you get into acting?

I never wanted to be an actor. My background as a gymnast left very little time for any recreational activities. If I ended up on the news, that was enough for me. I was in the hostel; I didn't have a mobile; we had to practice for eight hours a day. That left little time for anything else. It never occurred that I would end up acting. I have a Gold in parallel bar and a Silver in high bar at 58th National School Games, Pune and during one of the games I was spotted and was approached for the audition of Bournvita ad. That is how I came into the industry. It was destined.

■Was it tough to do the ad?

It was tough. I had no acting background. I have never taken any classes. It was difficult to face the camera, well-known actors and memorise dialogues and deliver them with emotion was so alien to me. This made me nervous. But I was determined that since I was offered to play a part I would do it to the best of my abilities. So, I worked really hard.

■You have done a couple of movies. Why not pursue Bollywood?

I am sure that there is something really big that will come my way from Bollywood. I am also looking at roles that I can play in web series. Since I came into this industry I have always tried different roles. I know only one thing however big or small the screen may be, my job is to give my best.

■You have done a few music videos. How has the experience been?

Doing music videos is so different from serials. There are two types of music videos. One where there is a song and there is a boy and or a girl and they go dancing about. Then there are videos that tell a story. What I have done comes under the second category. I love doing such music videos since they are shot within two-three days; it is a stress-buster. Listening to music and performing it is very relaxing.



Plan Your Sunday

It's hard to say no to coffee especially in this rainy season. How about making it yummier and healthier coffee with available ingredients in your kitchen? These hot coffees has the goodness of natural ingredients and spices like cinnamon and ginger that boost your immunity.

SPICY CINNAMON COFFEE WITH ORANGE ZEST

This a Perfect monsoon coffee with extra dose of caffeine. Natural ingredients like cinnamon, ginger and orange zest pairs beautifully with this creamy black coffee.

Ingredients:

- ◆ 3 tbsp ground coffee
- ◆ 2 tspn grated orange zest
- ◆ 2 tspn chopped crystallized ginger
- ◆ Pinch of cinnamon powder
- ◆ 3 cups hot water
- ◆ Whipped cream, cinnamon sticks and/or additional orange zest, optional

Preparation:

- ◆ Combine the coffee, orange zest, ginger

and cinnamon; pour into a Frenchpress and brew it for

4-5 minutes.

- ◆ Pour into mugs; if desired, garnish with whipped cream, cinnamon sticks and orange zest.

PARISIAN CHOCOLATE COFFEE

This Parisian Hot Chocolate Coffee is an indulgent blend of thick and creamy hot chocolate and bold hot dark roast coffee. The perfect brunch or dessert beverage for rainy day.

Ingredients:

- ◆ 1 cup freshly brewed French press coffee
- ◆ 1 cup full cream milk
- ◆ ½ cup heavy cream
- ◆ 2 tspn powdered sugar
- ◆ 60gm bittersweet chocolate
- ◆ whipped cream
- ◆ chocolate shavings

Preparation:

- ◆ In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, whisk together the milk, cream, and sugar and heat until bubbles start to form on the outer edge. Do not boil.
- ◆ Remove from heat and add in chopped chocolate, let set for 2 minutes, then whisk until a rich chocolate color forms. Let set for about five minutes.
- ◆ Pour hot coffee into two mugs, half each cup. Top it with hot chocolate to the coffee and finish off with whipped cream and chocolate shavings Note: Store in temperature of 20 degree C and humidity less than 5 per cent, away from foreign odours, for up to three weeks.

Courtesy: Abdul Sahid Khan, Head Trainer, Lavazza India

TELLY TALE

VIRENDRA SAXENA IS BACK ON THE SMALL SCREEN

After several extremely successful collaborations such as *Hum Paanch*, *Pavitra Rishta*, *Jodha Akbar*, *KumKum Bhagya*, *Kundali Bhagya*, Zee TV and Balaji Telefilms are set to present viewers with an exciting story about life, love, karma and destiny. Set against the backdrop of Mumbai, Zee TV's *Bhagya Lakshmi* will follow the journey of Lakshmi, a selfless girl of limited means, who despite her humble background and the curveballs life has thrown at her, always puts others' needs before hers. While TV actress Aishwarya Khare has been paired opposite the heartthrob television actor Rohit Suchanti to play the lead characters, featuring alongside them will also be the veteran television, film and theatre actor, Virendra Saxena.

With several notable characters and shows to his name, Virendra Saxena is definitely a prominent personality in the industry. The actor's work has been recognised across fields and he is all set to once again enthrall his fans, bringing yet



another interesting character to life with all his efficiency and artistry. Virendra who was last seen as a part of a show in 2010 is all set to return to the small screen after more than a decade with the role of Lakshmi's father, Manoj Bajwa, who has a rustic

charm and shares a great bond with his daughter. He firmly believes that Lakshmi has both his and his wife's values instilled in her and that their small family is only weaved in happiness.

Talking about making a comeback on television, Virendra Saxena said, "A good story always impacts the audience and their lives, and I'd like to believe *Bhagya Lakshmi* would do the same. I've been keeping away from TV for quite some time now, because the kind of stories that has been happening and the kind of roles I've been getting over the years had somehow bored me. In fact, when I got the offer for this shiiv also, I wasn't very curious, but when I read the script, I couldn't say no. Also, when I got to know that Ekta ji (Kapoor) wanted me to play this role, there was no way I could say no to the project because I have always had this huge respect for her for the person she is. Working with Balaji has always been a treat because the investments they do for their projects are really unfathomable."

NEW KHATARNAK CHALLENGE FOR KHILADIS

Colors' much-awaited stunt-based reality show, *Khatron Ke Khiladi* is back with bang as it has already captivated the viewers with its darr, dare and endless drama. This season is bigger, better, and wilder as we are back in Cape Town. "Yeh Hai Darr aur Dare ka battleground, welcome to Cape Town". *Khatron* ke real *khiladi* and the master of action, Rohit Shetty, and the makers of the show have left no stones unturned to make the show better than ever.

In the upcoming episode, Rohit Shetty will give another interesting challenge to the contestants to win the K medal. The winner will get the golden opportunity in the future challenges to skip one of the tasks and also choose any other contestant to perform the same on their behalf.

Vishal Aditya Singh, Shweta Tiwari & Divyanka Tripathi Dahiya will be chosen

to perform the task wherein they will stand around each other just like a Mexican standoff.

The thrill and fun didn't end here, as the episode also witnessed Divyanka flinching. In this task, as Rohit Shetty



asks rapid-fire questions to Divyanka, she starts to slow down and gradually drown in the water!

Curious? Who will win the K-Medal among Vishal Aditya Singh, Divyanka Tripathi & Shweta Tiwari?

CENTURY OF CELEBRATION

Adding to the monsoon cheer And continuing to spread the Khushiyon Wali Feeling, Wagle Ki Duniya - Navyi Peedhi, Naye Kiseey has continued to entertain the audience. To celebrate 100 episodes and to thank the viewers for declaring it the 'best show on television currently', lead actors Sumeet Raghavan, Pariva Pranati and new entrant Anju Jadhav, who comes in as Sumeet's new tough boss, engaged in a candid chat.

Delighted by the appreciation shown by the fans, Sumeet Raghavan said, "There are many reasons the audience love us so much. The credit goes out to the storyline and the atmosphere that we have all built on the sets. From making a conscious decision to avoid preachy content to building amazing bonds offscreen, it all reflects well on-screen in the interest of all generations. Aanjan ji and Bharati ji on the sets never fail to surprise us with the hard work and motivation they bring daily. The way Aanjan Ji comes so well prepared with all his lines learnt continues to inspire me to be a better actor."

Adding further, Pariva Pranati said, "I'm glad that we continue to inspire more and more people by the day. Recently a fan from the US got in touch with us, mentioning how we have impacted her and her family's life, it was truly surprising and unexpected. We continue to keep the episodes realistic and contribute from the nuances of daily life, ensuring we always stay connected with our fans. Also, a huge amount of credit goes to our bond that has been built over time. We bond over food, music and loads of *nak jhok*."

The upcoming track adds more thrill and excitement. Anju Jadhav on her entry in the show said, "Kiara Tejwani as a character is a business-minded individual who doesn't appreciate mixing emotions with work. Kiara enters the show as Rajesh Wagle's new boss, and she is here to take the company to new heights. The role and the show is what amazed me to accept this offer. It allows me to explore many emotions at a go. It is also something that I haven't explored before, and I truly believe I am blessed to have received this opportunity."

'I don't have fans, they are my friends'

ZAKIR KHAN, who has recently collaborated with KARAN JOHAR for a campaign film by Britannia Good Day, tells MUSBA HASHMI about the concept, what made him swap his look with KJo and that he misses stage

■How was your experience working with Britannia Good Day?

It was beautiful. We were going to start before the second lockdown, but the situations that arose caused a delay. Finally, we were able to come up with this film and I am happy and excited. I love the concept, so I was dying to be a part of it.

■How was your experience collaborating with Karan Johar for the campaign film?

It is a beautiful opportunity for me. He is someone I have seen him as a fan. He is an icon for a lot of us, over the years. I remember watching *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. I remember watching his interview on Doordarshan after the film. In our memory, it is always a magical moment when we meet a person we have seen on TV in real life. So, it is a magical moment for me. Someone I have seen giving interviews as a kid, today I am getting to see them work in real life.

■What made you guys come up with the idea of swapping. And how difficult or fun was it for you?

The idea itself is fun. As an artist I would like to say that image is for under confident people who are not sure of themselves. Protecting image is something you do when you are very insecure. I assume Karan as well as me, though we are two distinguished personalities, we have full faith in what we do in our separate fields. Thus, we didn't refrain from looking like someone else. The experience of swapping was so exciting that there was no second thought about doing it or not.

■A trait of Karan Johar that you would like to swap with yours.

I think his access to Shah Rukh Khan and all the actresses in the world. I am a huge Shah Rukh Khan fan and somebody who can be in his first circle is something that I would like to exchange. I can give him my cricket gang from Bombay in exchange for it, or my Anvar Kranti from *Chacha Vidhayak Hai Humare*. So, he can give me Shah Rukh Khan and I can give him Anvar Kranti.

■How do you think your fans will react when you swap your personality?

I think first of all I have no fans, all of them are my friends. And everything is fine in front of friends. Max to max, they will make fun of me and there is no harm in it. And I do not think that

Protecting image is something you do when you are very insecure. I assume Karan as well as me, though we are two distinguished personalities, we have full faith in what we do in our separate fields. Thus, we didn't refrain from looking like someone else. The experience of swapping was exciting



my fans see me like that. They know me in many different *avatars*. They know that I am a musician, I have played *sitar* for 21 years of my life and I do stand-up comedy. So, I keep doing things which are pole apart, in my life. The people who know me are not affected by it and the people who do not know me, I am not affected by them.

■While Karan and you are both writers, you both have very different personalities. Did you take any time to prepare or study each other's personality to execute this better?

Of course, I saw some of his interviews and tried to understand how he talks. Secondly, as an iconic figure, I somehow knew how he talks to a certain extent. But yes, some days before the shoot I tried to understand how he works. And as an artist, I am not a very good mimic but I can imitate. So, I was just trying to look at the kind of mannerisms I can pick, and what will look nice. There are some things which you pick, but they do not look good on you. So, the idea was to pick things which will look okay on me.

■You have been one of the most popular faces in Indian stand-up comedy. Do you think that now we have a wider audience to appreciate your field of art?

I feel even when the audience was less, it was wide for me. Because, the art form is so new that we still do not know what is its full potential. My aim is to explore and to reach to more and more people so that there comes a time when we know exactly the number of people that are there in the audience.

■Do you miss the stage? How different is it to perform on a virtual platform?

Stage is different from a virtual platform. It is like meeting someone you love in person and talking to them on video call. They are exactly two very different things. The affection is there of course, but the warmth is definitely missing. That hype, that rush of being on stage is definitely not there, though, the rush of good conversations is always there on an online platform. But not as great as what it is on stage. It is like asking somebody that how do they feel catching the scent of *biryani* as compared to actually getting to taste it. Of course, having *biryani* is more satisfying than just getting to smell it.

SERO-SURVEY 3 southern dists achieve herd immunity

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As per the findings of the fourth round of sero-survey, over 70 per cent of the population in Ganjam district has developed antibodies against Covid-19.

The survey conducted between June 16 and 20 revealed that Ganjam has the highest sero-prevalence of 70.9%, which means around 71% people in the district were infected with the virus and have recovered. Rayagada and Koraput districts have 63% and 61.3% sero-prevalence, respectively.

Experts claim sero-prevalence in 50%-60% or above population indicates herd immunity because when such a large part of the population develops antibodies against the

virus, the chain of transmission is broken and the spread of the disease diminishes.

A total of 1,230 samples from the community and 311 from healthcare workers were collected for the survey conducted in Ganjam, Rayagada and Koraput districts. Overall, 65.12% common people and 85.53% health workers had sero-prevalence, the study revealed.

“The State’s sero-survey report is satisfactory against the national average. People developed antibodies after being infected with Covid-19 in both first and second waves and after getting vaccinated against the virus. Mostly, senior citizens have developed antibodies as they were vaccinated in the first phase,” said Health Director Bijay Mohapatra.

ACF death: Police give clean chit to accused DFO

➤ **Say he has no links with ACF’s wife or death**
➤ **Bidyabharati to be grilled again**

PNS ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

In a major development in the mysterious death case of Paralakhemundi Assistant Conservator of Forests (ACF) Soumya Ranjan Mohapatra, the Gajapati police on Saturday virtually gave a clean chit to Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Sangram Keshari Behera and said he was “faultless”.

Gajapati SP Tapan Patnaik said the DFO has no links with the ACF’s death or with his wife Bidyabharati Panda.

“During questioning, the DFO clarified that he has no connection with Bidyabharati. We have also analysed the Call Detail Records (CDR) of the DFO. As per the CDR analysis so far, we concluded that he has no link with Bidyabharati. He has no link with the ACF’s cook Manmath Kumbh either,” said Patnaik.

Asked about the exact cause of death of the ACF, the SP said, “There is need for more investigation about the cause of death. I will speak on it after the probe is completed”

Clarifying on the abrupt stopping of the ambulance that carried a half charred Saumya to hospital, Patnaik said, “The ambulance had stopped for 15 minutes at the forest gate, because Bidyabharati had not carried cash nor any other belongings with her while accompanying her husband in the ambulance. Therefore, she stopped there and took cash other thing from the woman police officer’s house.”

Notably, the DFO was one of the three accused named in the murder case filed in con-

nection with the officer’s death, the other two being Bidyabharati and his cook.

Asked about the exact cause of death of the ACF, the SP said, “There is need for more investigation about the cause of death. I will speak on it after the probe is completed.”

However, the SP said Bidyabharati would be quizzed again in connection with the case. Source said that a five-member police team would visit a college in Balangir district, where Bidyabharati was studying, for a probe. The team would investigate under what circumstances she had been to Balangir after her marriage.

During the probe, it was revealed that Bidyabharati had hosted a party in Balangir post her marriage. The investigators would find out in which vehicle she had visited the venue for celebration.

BJD silent on Central negligence: Congress



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Congress on Friday accused both the Union and State Governments for neglecting Odisha.

While the Modi Government has been denying the legitimate share of Odisha, the Naveen Patnaik Government has never raised voice about this, it said.

Newly-appointed PCC media cell chairman Ganeswar Behera said that since 2014-15, the Central Government has been gradually deducting the State’s share up to 37% from the

Finance Commission’s recommendations.

The Centre even unevenly distributed cess and surcharge on petrol and diesel among the States and ignored the recommendations of the Finance Commission and Odisha bears the loss of mining royalty because of the Centre’s apathy, Behera said.

“It’s quite unfortunate that the BJD always chooses not to react to the Central negligence except sporadic lukewarm reaction. It clearly indicates that the BJD and the BJP have a secret understanding,” he alleged.

Rahul, PCC mourn Mishra’s demise

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Former AICC president Rahul Gandhi on Friday mourned the death of former PCC president and former Balangir MP Nityananda Mishra. Gandhi spoke to the late Mishra’s son Bibhudutt and consoled him and family members.

AICC State observer A Chella Kumar also spoke to the family members of Mishra and expressed deep grief.

At the Congress Bhawan here, PCC president Niranjan Patnaik laid the Congress flag and offered floral tribute to Mishra describing him as a dedicated politician.



‘Raise age limit to 42 years for Govt jobs’

Youth Cong submits memo to State Govt

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Demanding to raise the age limit for the Government jobs from 32 years to 42, the Youth Congress on Friday questioned the State Government on a range of issues relating to the rising unemployment.

In Press conference, Youth Congress State president Dr Smruti Ranjan Lenka said the Government should publish a whitepaper on the positions of vacancies in various Government departments. While most of the States have raised the upper age limit for the Government jobs, why Odisha is not doing so? On which ground the validity of the Government job advertisements has been made five

long years, he asked.

Lenka expressed concern over the rising unemployment in the State even after 21 years’ consecutive rule of the Naveen Patnaik Government. The present Covid pandemic has further deepened the situation and many youths are living under the mental stress.

A delegation of Youth Congress members submitted a memorandum on these issues to the Chief Secretary.

COVID EX-GRATIA Kin of 17 deceased scribes to get aid

TOTAL ₹2.55 CRORE TO BE GIVEN

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

With the Chief Minister’s approval, the Information and Public Relations Department has sanctioned ex-gratia @ Rs 15 lakh to the next of kin of 17 working journalists, who have died of Covid-19. A

sum of Rs 2.55 crore has been sanctioned from the Journalist Welfare Fund.

A few more such cases have been received by the department for which assistance would be disbursed after due verification. After required enquiry at the district level, eligible applications would be considered for disbursement of the ex-gratia compassionate assistance.

ECoR GM visits BBSR rly station

₹1,075-cr budget for amenities

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

East Coast Railway General Manager Vidya Bhushan inspected the Bhubaneswar Railway Station on Friday afternoon and took stock of the various passenger amenities and facilities required to be developed as part of the station’s redevelopment plan.

The station will be developed into a commercial hub

with aesthetic lighting, improved signage, and improved passenger amenities including waiting hall. More amenities will be provided to the travelling public. Apart from this, the circulating area will also be developed and will be beautified. Drainage system will be thoroughly addressed.

More parking space will be provided near PF-6 side, he said. Bhushan said, “An MoU for Bhubaneswar station redevelopment between the State Government and the ECoR was signed in 2019. The station

will be developed in collaboration with the State Government at an approximate cost of Rs 1,075 crore. shopping complex, parking and other facilities will be provided in the station. Two additional lines will be constructed. This will be constructed as a modern business centre.

This would be one of the best stations in the eastern part of India.” After finalising the detailed project estimate, tender would be floated. Within six months, work would be done as per the plan, he informed.

IN BBSR ₹38L brown sugar seized; 2 held

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In yet another drug bust, the Commissionerate police on Saturday seized 380 grams of brown sugar in Bhubaneswar and arrested two persons in this connection.

Besides, a huge amount of cash and a bike were seized from their possession.

The drug peddlers were identified as Arun Diga of the Chandrasekharpur area in the city and Dinabandhu Majhi of Begunia in Khordha district.

The duo was intercepted near Tapoban Basti, while they were on their way from Khordha to the city. During the search, the contraband along with Rs 1.48 lakh in cash was found in their possession.

The estimated market value of the seized contraband is around Rs 38 lakh.

DCP Umashankar Dash said the drug peddlers were intercepted while they were transporting the brown sugar on a bike. Further investigation was on, added Dash.

State’s brackish aquaculture grows 747%

👉 Seafood export crosses ₹3,000 crore

👉 CS directs for forward looking policy to boost sector

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The production of brackish water fish increased from 11,460 MT in the year 2011-12 to 97,125 MT in 2020-21, thereby marking a record growth of 747.51%. Similarly, the area under brackish water aquaculture increased from 5,860 hectares to 17,780 hectares during the same period.

Concomitantly, the sea food export value from Odisha also increased from Rs 801 crore in the year 2011-12 to Rs 3,107 crore in the year 2020-21

in spite of the economic slowdown caused by Covid-19. The quantum of export in the year 2011-12 was around 21,311 MT which increased to 60,718 MT in the year 2020-21.

This was known from a meeting held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mahapatra.

Secretary Fisheries and Animal resources Development R Raghu Prasad appraised that Odisha sea food has caught the global market more particularly in Japan, China, countries in USA, European Union, South

East Asia and Middle East.

A review showed recently around 2,000 applications for brackish water aquaculture were submitted to different tehsils in six coastal districts, Baleswar, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam. Chief Secretary Mahapatra directed the concerned district administrations to take quick action on the proposals as per the existing provisions.

Mahapatra directed to tap the potentialities in the sector by bringing in the self-help

groups, primary fishermen cooperative societies, women cooperatives, educated unemployed enterprising youths, partnership farms and State owned cooperatives on commercial basis. He directed the Departments of Revenue and Disaster Management, Fisheries and Animal Resources Development and Forest and Environment and the IDCO to work out a dynamic and facilitating policy for tapping the available potential of brackish water aquaculture.

IN JAJPUR POVERTY-STRICKEN COUPLE ENDS LIFE

PNS ■ JAJPUR

A poverty-stricken couple was found hanging at their home at Jugala village under the Korei police station in Jajpur district on Saturday.

The deceased were identified as Santanu Jena and his wife Sabita.

As per the family members of the deceased, an altercation had ensued between them on late Friday night after they had.

Subsequently, though the couple went to sleep, both

were found hanging in the morning.

While Sabita was spotted hanging from the ceiling of her room by a saree, Santanu’s body was found hanging from a tree near his residence.

Getting information, the Korei police rushed to the spot and sent the bodies for post-mortem.

“Though from the preliminary probe it appears that the couple committed suicide over domestic feud, we are investigating the case from all angles,” police said.

‘Expedite Barabati Fort renovation’

BJD MPs Patra, Singh submit memo to Union Minister

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Urging to expedite the renovation work of the historic Brabati Fort (Gadakhai) in Cuttack, BJD Rajya Sabha members Dr Sasmita Patra and Subash Singh submitted a memorandum to Union Minister for Tourism and Culture G Kissan Reddy on Friday.

The Union Government had sanctioned Rs 17.25 crore in the years 2007-09 under the Urban Infrastructure Development Scheme for Small and Medium Town Programme to excavate and

reconstruct the moat around the Barabati Fort. The objective behind the project was to beautify the fort, thereby making it an attractive tourist place. But no concrete steps have been taken in this direction.

The memorandum also mentioned that while the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) would execute the work in coordination with the State Government, parts of the work were also assigned to the Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC).

On a question of the Subash Singh in Rajya Sabha, the Minister had stated that

fund has already been sanctioned and soon the ASI would start work.

“But three months have already passed since the assurance of the Minister. Neither the ASI has started work nor handed over the work to the State Government,” said Singh.

Singh added because it is a heritage and has archeological significance and a major portion of the area is under prohibitory zone, the State Government, the Cuttack district administration and the CMC are unable to develop the area.



Another low pressure by July 28

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Even as heavy rain are lashing parts of the State, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) Regional Centre here on Saturday said a fresh low pressure area is likely to form over the north Bay of Bengal and its neighbourhood around July 28.

As per IMD, the south-west monsoon has been active over the State and several districts in the interior Odisha, Subarnapur, Boudh and Puri have received heavy to very heavy rainfall under the influence of the existing low pressure system.

“Yesterday’s well-marked low pressure area over north-west Bay of Bengal off north Odisha-West Bengal coasts now lies as a low pressure area over Jharkhand and adjoining

north Chhattisgarh,” said the IMD.

The IMD has predicted heavy rainfall in one or two places in the districts of Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Baleswar in the next 24 hours.

On July26 heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar and Baleswar.

On July 27, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Dhenkanal, Baleswar, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada and Nabarangpur.

On July 28, Heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Bargarh, Sambalpur,

Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj.

Thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Boudh,

Sonepur, Bargarh, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Angul, Dhenkanal, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj and Balasore.

On July 29, heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Sundargarh, Deogarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Bhadrak and heavy rainfall very likely to occur at one or two places over the districts of Jajpur, Kendrapada Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Puri, Angul, Dhenkanal and Sambalpur.

Lions BBSR Orissa holds Institute Day

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Lions Club Bhubaneswar Orissa held its Institute Day on Friday with Covid protocols. The new members were inducted by chief guest Er Purna Chandra Padhi with taking their oath.

The new office-bearers for the year 2021-22, president Er Siddhartha Mohanty, secretary Dr Bipin Bihari

Mishra and treasurer S Kanhu Charan Prusty, were instituted by former District Governor Nikunja Chhotray.

PID VK Luthra wished all members for their wellbeing and thanked them for the works they undertook during the Covid pandemic. All past District Governors, Suresh Chandra Nayak, IV Koteswar Rao, Suresh Chandra Padhi, Dr BK Tripathy and Dhiren Dhal also wished the members and the new office-bearers.



Kandhamal to have more eco-retreat camps ALSO MUSEUM FOR DIST’S ART AND CRAFT

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The natural endowments of Kandhamal district would be developed into a tourist treasure with different types of activities, said Principal Adviser to Chief Minister and Chairman WODC Asit Tripathy after a visit to the district and reviewing its tourism potential with senior officers of the district at Phulbani on Saturday.

Tripathy said, “Kandhamal district is full of scenic beauties. Its hill ranges are a part of the great Eastern Ghats. Last year, an eco-retreat camp was held at Darngibadi and it got encouraging response. This year, more eco-retreat camps will be arranged at attractive spots. It has been planned to continue retreat camps for five years so that tourists, tour operators and the businessmen associated with tourism will get a scope to expand their activities.”

Tripathy directed the district Collector to identify the roads con-

necting to the dazzling waterfalls like Kuturi, Putudi and Katramal. These roads would be developed to attract more tourists to these spots. The Forest Department was asked to develop the roads in a time-bound manner for use of the tourists during the coming winter season. The department was also asked to arrange more eco camps in the district.

Looking into the art and culture treasure of the district, Tripathy asked the district administration to identify a proper place for establishing a district museum.

The Superintendent of Police was directed to promote the district as a biking circuit linking it with Chandaka in Bhubaneswar. The SP was advised to develop the facility in coordination with Biking Clubs at State and national levels. It was decided to start a biking festival along with the eco-camps during the coming winter.

Collector D Brunda, SP Vinit Agrawal, ADM Basant Kumar Sahoo and District Tourist Officer AK Barik participated in the meeting.

Chand is Vedanta Resident Dir for Odisha, C'garh

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Vedanta Limited appointed Dr Tapan Kumar Chand as its Resident Director of Odisha and Chhattisgarh. Chand, who is a former CMD of Nalco and currently Independent Director of Vedanta-owned Bharat Aluminium Company (Balco) assumed his new office on Friday.

Dr Chand has a successful track record of performance in coal, steel and aluminium sector. He will look after operationalisation of three coal blocks that the Vedanta has recently won in auction in Odisha with annual raising of 18 million tonnes and bauxite security of 22 million tonnes per annum, a release from Vedanta stated.



He will also oversee the proposed Aluminium Park projects in Jharsuguda and Chhattisgarh.

This high-level appointment comes in the wake of the Vedanta pushing for emerging as the second largest producer of aluminium in the world with 3-MT aluminium and 6-MT alumina

capacities. At present, the Vedanta is the largest producer of aluminium in India. With the aluminium demand likely to be doubled in next five years, the Vedanta's plan is timely to meet the country's demand for aluminium and ensuring AtmaNirbhar Bharat. Since Dr Chand is known for innovative and empathetic CSR schemes taking the stakeholders on board, the Vedanta is likely to have a transformational community engagement approach in these areas, a welcome change for locals in Odisha and Chhattisgarh.

Viral audio: Baleswar jail warder axed

After bribing charge against him confirmed

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A warder of the Balasore Jail has been put under suspension by the Director General, Prisons, following an inquiry against him. The suspended cop is Himanu Mahanta. According to the reports, an audio conversation between Mahanta and another person went viral where the latter was asking some favours for his brother who was lodged in the jail.

In lieu Mahanta had asked for money from him. After the purported audio surfaced it was probed by the department and Baripada Jail Superintendent Pradipta Kumar Behera was asked to submit a report following an inquiry into the allegation. The report revealed that Mahanta had received cash of Rs 3,000 from the brother of the inmate to extend certain facilities in the jail. Jail Superintendent Balasore

Jail Sujit Kumar Raul confirming the allegations surfaced against Mahanta also iterated that he was suspended basing on the report by the DG Prisons. Reports also said that Mahanta used to take money from the relatives of inmates to extend facilities such as giving phones, supplying gutkha, cigarettes and other items. It is also alleged that the suspended cop although is a group C staff, maintains a luxurious lifestyle and owns cars too.

Aluminium dross processing unit inaugurated

CM UNVEILS INDIA'S FIRST FACILITY IN JHARSUGUDA

PNS ■ JHARSUGUDA

Runaya, one of India's fastest growing manufacturing start-ups, has announced the inauguration of its aluminium dross processing and refining unit, the first such facility in India. Set up in Jharsuguda's Vedanta Aluminium premises, the facility provides end-to-end green and sustainable solution for recovery of aluminium from dross and processing residual waste to manufacture steel slag conditioners. The unit was inaugurated in virtual mode by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday. Among others, Vedanta CEO CN Singh was present. Aluminium dross is a byproduct of the aluminium smelting process and typically ends up in the landfill with no comprehensive solution for its disposal till now. It is estimated that the world produces about 65 million tonnes of aluminium per annum currently, which results in about 1 MT of aluminium dross being produced every year. In India alone, this figure stands at about 60,000 MT. Runaya CEO Annanya Agarwal said, "Runaya aims to replace the linear economy model that the industry is currently following to pave the way for a circular economy model that is restorative. This pioneering technology ensures 100% utilisation of waste. Currently, even the best practices in the industry can only process 50% of waste. Runaya's breakthrough approach delivers significant positive impact for the mining and metals industry."



2 short films from Ganjam bag Int'l award

KRUSHNA CHANDRA PANDA ■ BRAHMAMPUR

During the current pandemic, the Nrityam Kala Gabeshana Kendra of Hinjilicut known as DK Films in Ganjam received a national level award for its short films at Roshni International Film Festival-2021 organised at Aurangabad, Maharashtra, by Director Tushar Tarote. There were 1,200 films in fray from national and international levels. Two films 'Anik' and 'Abhijan' were selected for awards in the fest. The film Anik conveys social awareness on Covid 19. Aska IIC Prashant Kumar Sahu is the main protagonist in the short film where a child actor of the film Prasadika Panda gave a splendid performance. She got the best child actor award. Film Abhijan also got the best concept award. Both the films are directed by Guru Krishna DK, whereas the story and script of Abhijan was written by Priyambad Pattanayak.



In the film, model and actress Rameshwari Nanda and Divyanshi are the cast, while cinematography was done by TSrinu, G Lohit and Gopal, whereas special lead was given by Ratnakar Siya and Somnath. Guru DK's wife Gitanjali

Dash is also one of the key mentors of the film. Among other key players, Sanchita and Kajal worked as assistants for the film and coordinated the work of Vivek, Chiman, Rashmi and Sanyashi Maharana.

President of Nrityam Nilamani Patnaik hailed the efforts made by the local artists of the institute and appealed the State Chief Minister for necessary assistance for further growth and development of the institution.

Workers' exploitation in cement firms opposed

Let health, safety, security be a fundamental right for all citizen'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Building and Wood Workers Federation opposed the pollution and exploitation of worker in cement industries. It alleged that pollution and labour exploitation is severe in cement industries in Asia and the Pacific region. Since multinational cement companies are coming together to consolidate their operation by merger and takeover, time is ripe for all cement workers unions to come together united and collectively fight any attempt to undermine the trade unions and workers rights across the Asia Pacific Region, said former Rajya Sabha MP and BWI vice chair and chairman BWI Migrant Workers Group Dr RC Khuntia. He was addressing the Asia Pacific Trade Union meet virtually arranged by the BWI. "We are passing through a tough phase as economies across the region continue to grapple with Covid-19 and its socio-economic impact resulting in loss of lives and livelihoods. In the cement sector too, new challenges emerged for the unions especially, the contractual and out-sourced workers as they bore the brunt of the health crisis as workers have been

confronted with job loss, wage cuts and also lack of adequate security cover," said Khuntia. He further said, "As unions, we have to ensure that rights of workers whether regular or contractual are upheld and any form of discriminatory practice is not accepted." Apart from labour issues, another important concern in the industries creating worries is environmental degradation and climate change. "As trade unions, we need to further our engagement and work with the companies to promote environment- friendly and sustainable solutions through green and clean practices," he said. The meeting unanimously passed a resolution urging all national Governments, including Government of India, to make law for ensuring health and safety and total security a fundamental right for all citizen. Regional Representative of BWI Apoliner Tolentino, BWI Police Officer Dr Rajeev Sharma, Prerna Prasad, Sakshi Aggarwal besides leaders from 37 trade unions in cement industries of India, Indonesia, Philippines and Cambodia participated in the virtual meeting.



CM LAYS STONE OF NEW IFFCO PLANT



PNS ■ PARADIP

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid foundation stone for yet another project at IFFCO Paradip. It is the third sulphuric acid plant with capacity 2,000 MT per day. The plant will adopt the latest technology ensuring the emission levels at

the lowest in the country. The plant will also recover the process heat in form of high pressure steam, which is an important source of energy for power generation as well as other process requirements. The plant is targeted to be in operation in 2023. The project's estimated cost is Rs 400

crore. It is yet another step by IFFCO Managing Director Dr US Awasthi in his commitment to serve farmers. IFFCO Paradeep Unit Head KJ Patel, along with his team and representatives from Employees' Union and Officers' Association were present on the occasion.

IN BALESWAR

Spurious liquor seized; Jatra actors held

THEY ARE ALL STATED TO BE OPERA ACTORS AND HAD BEEN PERFORMING SHOWS FOR 12 YEARS

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Excise personnel following a tipoff raided in Jittal village under the Khantapara police station limits and seized a huge cache of spurious IMFL and arrested three bootleggers involved in the illegal activity. They were identified as Bijay Mahalik, Mrutunjay Mahalik both of Jittal village and Kishor Sahu of Jamujhadi area. They are all stated to be opera actors and had been performing shows for 12 years. During lockdown when they had no jobs, they had switched over to illegal trade. The department besides seizing the sealed bottles also seized fake labels, seals and other incrementing materials. They were forwarded to court on Saturday, reports added.

Website to promote Odia literature unveiled

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

To promote Odia literature, a website, www.recite.world, was unveiled virtually by Governor Ganeshi Lal on the occasion of Niladri Bije on Friday. Eastern Media Ltd Executive Director Tanaya Patnaik and Mo School Abhijan Chairman Sushmita Bagchi attended the virtual launching ceremony as speakers. Udaygiri Foundation chairman and ReciteWorld Programme Lead JP Jagdev said the foundation works towards preventing the State's culture, tradition, and language from imminent extinction, misinterpretation and corruption. It promotes understanding and usage of the language among the current generation. "The www.recite.world is a web/mobile application, where our past and present literary works will be made available to the public free of cost for them to easily access any-

time anywhere," he said. "As a part of the strategies to improve the acceptance and usage, we will make the contents available in dramatised audiobook format showing listeners the original texts. The new-age users then can familiarise themselves with both the written texts and their proper pronunciations. We hope this will help our language gain wider acceptance and deserving respectability. In the first batch of authors, we have chosen 50 short stories from the greats like Fakir Mohan Senapati, Godabarish Mahapatra, Lakshmikanta Mahapatra, Bhagabati Charan Panigrahi, Surendra Mohanty and Akhil Mohan Pattnaik," informed Jagdev.



Sainik Schools Entrance list today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The final merit list, including waiting list, of the All India Sainik Schools Entrance Exam-2021 for admission to Class-VI in the Sainik School, Bhubaneswar would be hosted on Sainik School Bhubaneswar website: www.sainikschoolbhubaneswar.org on Sunday

(July 25) at 8 am. The selected candidates would be eligible for admission in the school for the academic session 2021-22 subject to merit under each category, medical fitness, verification of original documents, submission of requisite certificates and payment of requisite fees, said a release issued by the Sainik School Principal.

State announces vax facility for foreign returnees

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Now, people returning from foreign countries can get a second dose of Covishield and avail vaccination certificate in Odisha. If any Indian citizen, who has taken the first dose of Covishield or AstraZeneca in a foreign country, can take the second dose in the State after a prescribed interval period and also get a certificate for the same. After receiving instruction from the Centre, Health Additional Chief Secretary PK Mohapatra has written a letter to district Collectors, Municipal Commissioners and Chief District Medical & Public Health Officers in this regard. The letter said, "If an Indian national beneficiary has

taken first dose of Covishield or AstraZeneca (ChAdOx1 nCov-19) vaccine outside India then the beneficiary can register on Co-WIN at the time of taking second dose of Covishield after prescribed time interval and details of first dose can be recorded on the Co-WIN at the same time." At present, the gap between the first and second doses of Covishield vaccine is 12-16 weeks. The Collectors and

Municipal Commissioners have been asked to inform all programme officers, managers, vaccinators and verifiers engaged at the Covid-19 vaccination sites to implement the decision immediately. Earlier, the State Government had reduced the gap period between two doses of Covishield vaccine for the people seeking to undertake foreign travel for educational purposes, for employment opportunities and the India's contingent to the Tokyo Olympic Games. The interval period was reduced to 28 days from 84 days only for the above category of beneficiaries. Moreover, the State Government had also issued instructions to the officials for vaccination of Nepali nationals in Odisha.

Prof Das new VC of CU of Jharkhand



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Professor Kshiti Bhushan Das from Odisha has been appointed as the new Vice-Chancellor of the Central University of Jharkhand. President Ram Nath Kovind appointed vice-chancellors to 12 Central Universities, including Jharkhand Central University, on Friday. Prof Das, presently the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Odisha, Koraput, has 38 years of experience in academics and research. He has authored five books and his research papers have been pub-

lished in many national and international journals. Prior to joining the Central University of Odisha, Prof Das was the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. He was also the Dean and Professor of Commerce and Management, Utkal University and SOA University, Bhubaneswar. During his career, he also held different positions such as Director, College Dev. Council, Registrar, Dean, Head of the Department and Programme Coordinator at the Utkal University.

Booster shot with 2nd gen vax needed: AIIMS



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Dr Randeep Guleria on Saturday said that India might have to adopt a booster dose with second-generation Covid-19 vaccines as the Delta variant of the coronavirus has swept across the world and driven up infections in several countries.

He further said Bharat Biotech's Covaxin trials for children are presently under-way and the results are expected to be released by September.

"It seems that we probably need the booster dose of vaccines as with the passage of time the immunity tends to fall," Dr Guleria said. "There is waning immunity. We would like to have a booster dose that will cover for various emerging variants," Dr Guleria said adding that the booster dose will be a second-generation vaccine.

"We will have second-generation vaccines which would be better in terms of the immunity they give, covering of the new variants and a having a



better overall efficacy," Dr Guleria said.

On Covaxin trials on children, he said: "The Bharat Biotech's Covaxin trials should be over by August or September, and by that time we should get an approval. Pfizer vaccine has been already approved by the FDA (US regulator - Food and Drug Administration). Hopefully, by September, we should start vaccinating children, and that will be a big boost as far as breaking the chain of transmission is concerned."

Dr Guleria's statement comes as the second dose of Covaxin is likely to be administered to children aged 2-6 years in trials next week. "We need to get our own vaccines too - that's why both Bharat Biotech and Zydus are impor-

tant. Getting the Pfizer vaccine will also be helpful, as there is enough data to suggest it's safe... but we can't be sure if we will get required numbers. We will hopefully have more than one vaccine for children by September," he said. The second dose of Covaxin has already been given to children between the ages of 6-12 years at the Delhi AIIMS. Besides Covaxin, the trials for Zydus Cadila's vaccine for children are also currently underway in the country.

On June 7, Delhi AIIMS started screening children between the age of 2 to 17 for trials of Covid-19 vaccine. On May 12, the DCGI granted permission to Bharat Biotech to carry out phase 2, phase 3 trials of Covaxin on children as young as two.

ICSE declares Class 10th, 12th Board results



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Council of Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE), which conducts the exams for the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), or Class 10, and Indian School Certificate (ISC), or Class 12, on Saturday declared the results of the cancelled exams.

The overall pass percentage for this year is 99.98 per cent for ICSE results and 99.76 per cent for ISC results.

The CBSE is scheduled to declare the results any day next week.

The Southern region has secured the best pass percentage for the Class 10th and Class 12th exam results followed by the Western region in Class 10th results and Northern region for Class 12th results. While the pass percentage for the Southern region in ICSE results is 100 per cent, it is 99.91 per cent for ISC exams.

Delhi NCR has recorded a pass percentage of 100 percent. In ISC Class 12 results, Delhi has also recorded 99.93%.

The overall pass percentage in West Bengal for ICSE is 99.98 per cent and it is 99.63 per cent for ISC Class 12th. As many as 39,520 and 26,859 students have enrolled for Class

Delhi NCR has recorded a pass percentage of 100%. In ISC Class 12 results, Delhi has also recorded 99.93%.

10th ICSE and ISC Class 12th exams respectively.

Odisha has recorded a pass percentage of 99.98 per cent in the ICSE results While in ISC Class 12 results, the state has recorded 99.83 per cent. In this year, 8,935 students have appeared for the ICSE examination. For ISC exams, 1,813 have appeared this year.

The overall pass percentage in Punjab for ICSE is 99.99 per cent and it is 99.79 per cent for ISC Class 12th. As many as 13,773 and 2,796 students have enrolled for Class 10th ICSE and ISC Class 12th exams respectively.

Karnataka has recorded a pass percentage of 100 per cent in the ICSE results While in ISC Class 12 results, the state has also recorded 99.95 per cent. The analysis of results of other States were being examined till the report filed.

Cong appoints new State chiefs in Assam, Manipur

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday made changes in its Assam and Manipur units. While Bhupen Bora was appointed as chief of its Assam unit by replacing party's Rajya Sabha member Ripun Bora for the post, Loken Singh was appointed interim president of the Manipur Pradesh Congress with immediate effect till a full-time chief is named.

With this the Congress has effected changes in four States within a week's time including Punjab and Uttarakhand. Of the changes done, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur goes to assembly polls next year while elections were conducted in April this year in Assam where the party's performance was not good.

Continuing with the organisational revamp, a party statement said Congress pres-

ident Sonia Gandhi has appointed Bhupen Bora as president of the Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) and also named three working presidents -- Rana Goswami, Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha and Jakir Hussain Sikdar.

The organisational changes in the state unit came weeks after the party's defeat in the assembly polls for which it entered into a grand alliance with the Badruddin Ajmal-led AIUDF and some other parties but failed to stop the BJP from coming back to power.

The party appreciates the contributions of outgoing APCC president Ripun Bora, the statement said.

Bhupen Bora and Rana Goswami are being relieved from their present responsibilities as All India Congress Committee secretaries, it said.

In another appointment, Loken Singh was appointed

interim president of the Manipur Pradesh Congress Committee with immediate effect till a full-time chief is named.

AICC general secretary Organisation K C Venugopal in a statement said the Congress high has appointed Nameirakpam Loken Singh as the interim president of the Manipur unit of the party. The development took place following the resignation of party leader Govindas Konthoujam as the MPC president a few days ago. The appointment of Loken Singh, senior vice-president of the MPCC, comes into force with immediate effect. Venugopal said that Loken Singh, also an MLA, will be in his new position till a full-time state unit president is appointed.

Also, the party named Arya Kumar Jnanendra as chief organiser for the Odisha Pradesh Congress Seva Dal.

SC junks PIL to declare NCLT can't act as appellate authority

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has declined to entertain a PIL seeking to declare that the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) cannot act as an appellate authority to the decisions of the top court and find flaws so as to circumvent the "rule of law" laid down.

A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said the petition is clearly not maintainable and there is no reason to entertain the petition under Article 32.

"It is not necessary for this court to return any finding on the question sought to be raised in the abstract without any live challenge to an order of the adjudicating

authority. In any event there are appellate remedies available under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to an aggrieved party. The petition is dismissed," the bench said.

The apex court was hearing a PIL filed by one Ashok Surana seeking to declare that the NCLT cannot act as an appellate authority to the decisions of this court and find flaws so as to circumvent the "rule of law" laid down.

The plea also sought directions that the "rule of law" laid down by the top court is binding on the authorities below without any conditions and cannot be

sidelined or overruled.

"Declare that the rule of constructive res judicata (matter decided) applies to the decisions of this court and is a fundamental rule which sustains the rule of law in ensuring finality to litigation," the plea said.

Surana submitted that the NCLT has misinterpreted the judgments of this court and, hence, the invocation of the jurisdiction under Article 32 is sought to be justified.

He also clarified that he is not a party to any of the proceedings before the adjudicating authority under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016. PTI

Classic case of missing spine: Rahul at Govt's vax drive timeline comment

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Government informed Parliament that no fixed timeline can be indicated at present for the completion of the vaccination drive, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Saturday took a swipe saying people's lives are on the line and it's a classic case of a missing spine.

In a tweet he said, "People's lives on the line, Government admits no timeline, classic case of missing spine."

He tweeted with the hashtag of #WhereAreVaccines.

His remarks came a day after the government said that no fixed timeline can be indicated at present for the com-



pletion of the vaccination drive.

The Government said it is expected that beneficiaries aged 18 years and above will be vaccinated by December 2021.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Bharati

Pravin Pawar in response to Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and Lok Sabha MP Mala Roy's unstarred question said, "The Covid-19 vaccination is an ongoing and dynamic process, which is being guided by National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAK) on the basis of concurrent scientific evidence."

She said that in view of the dynamic and evolving nature of the Covid-19 pandemic, "no fixed timeline at present can be indicated for the completion of vaccination drive".

Pawar said, "However, it is expected that beneficiaries aged 18 years and above will be vaccinated by December 2021."

SC to hear plea on premature release from jail

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to hear a plea that has raised a legal issue as to whether the policy for premature release from jail existing at the time of conviction or the subsequent one which is in existence at the time of consideration of such relief would be applicable.

The apex court sought the response of the Madhya Pradesh government and others within four weeks on the plea filed by a convict, who is serving a life term and is seeking directions to the state to release him from jail on the grounds that he has undergone a sentence of over 20 years including the period of remission.

The petitioner has said that he also qualifies under the policy for premature release which was applicable at the time of his conviction in the case.

The plea came up for hearing on Friday before a bench of justices L Nageswara Rao and Hrishikesh Roy which issued a notice seeking the response of the state government and others.

"Issue notice returnable in four weeks," the bench said.

The petition, filed through advocate Rishi Malhotra, said the petitioner was convicted by a trial court in a case of 1996 along with others and was sentenced to life imprisonment in September 2005.

The plea said at the time of his conviction, the policy for premature release dated December 4, 1978 was applicable.

"However, for the first time on January 10, 2012, there was a substantial change/departure from the said policy wherein it stipulated that such prisoners who are facing life imprisonment would have to undergo actual sentence of 20 years with a total sentence of 26 years," it said.

The plea said as per the December 1978 policy, any convict who has been sentenced to life imprisonment after December 18, 1978 and has undergone 14 years of the actual sentence and completed a total sentence of 20 years would be entitled to premature release. PTI

MP, Gujarat likely to get intense rainfall in next 2-3 days: IMD



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parts of central and adjoining west India, particularly the States of Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, are likely to have some intense rainfall activity for the next two-three days. The India Meteorology Department (IMD) on Saturday said rainfall intensity along the west coast is expected to decrease over the next 24 hours, in a much needed relief to rain-battered Maharashtra and Goa. Rainfall activity will increase over the north Indian plains and hills from July 25, it said.

Having already drenched Chhattisgarh, Telangana, east Madhya Pradesh and central Maharashtra, the system has now shifted its focus on to the western half of Madhya Pradesh. The IMD has indicated that the system will produce isolated extremely heavy falls over west Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, July 24.

Therefore, a red warning has been issued over the subdivision for the day, as it instructs the residents to 'take action' to protect themselves from rough weather. Meanwhile, since the beginning of the monsoon period on June 1, both Madhya Pradesh

and Gujarat have received below-average rainfall.

"Further reduction in rainfall intensity is very likely along the west coast, including Konkan, Goa and adjoining interior Maharashtra, during the next 24 hours," the IMD said. "Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls (a r e) very likely to continue over west coast, including Maharashtra, on July 24 and isolated heavy falls thereafter," it said. Extremely heavy rains have killed scores of people in Maharashtra over the past few days, submerging several areas and damaging property.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has enhanced the number of its teams from 26 to 34 for undertaking rescue operations in the coastal areas of Maharashtra that have been hit by landslides and floods triggered by heavy rainfall.

A spokesperson for the federal contingency force said these teams are being deployed in affected areas of Mumbai, Ratnagiri, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Satara, Sangli, Sindhudurg, Kolhapur, Pune and Nagpur for rescue and relief work after consultation

with the state administration.

"In view of the severity of the situation, additional eight NDRF teams have been airlifted from Kolkata and Vadodara base which are being deployed in affected areas of Maharashtra," the spokesperson said. "This will take the total NDRF deployment to 34 teams," the spokesperson said.

The IMD said scattered to fairly widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls are likely to continue over Gujarat till July and reduce thereafter. Widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls are likely to continue over east Rajasthan till July 26 and reduce thereafter.

In north India, rainfall activity is likely to increase over northwest India from July 25. "Fairly widespread to widespread rainfall with isolated heavy to very heavy falls (are) likely over Uttarakhand during July 25-28; Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and West Uttar Pradesh during July 26-28, and Punjab and east Uttar Pradesh on July 27 and 28," the IMD said.

Isolated extremely heavy falls are also likely over Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand on July 27 and 28, it added.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI

LEVEL 6th, C-WING, DELHI SECRETARIAT, NEW Delhi-110002

PUBLIC NOTICE

Ban on sharp synthetic/nylon kite flying thread including popularly known "Chinese Manjha"

This is for the information of the general public that in order to prevent the adverse effects on human beings, cattle population, birds, soil and ecology and in exercise of the powers conferred by section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986) read with Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs' Notification No. SO 667 (E), dated 10th September, 1992, a Notification was issued on 10.01.2017 by order and in the name of the Hon'ble Lt. Governor of the NCT of Delhi with the following directions:-

1. There shall be complete ban on the sale, production, storage, supply, import, and use of kite flying thread made out of nylon, plastic or any other synthetic material including popularly known as "Chinese manja" and any other kite-flying thread that is sharp or made sharp such as by being laced with glass, metal or any other sharp materials in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

2. Kite flying shall be permissible only with a cotton thread, free from any sharp/ metallic/ glass components/adhesives/thread strengthening materials.

Any breach of the above directions may be reported to the office of the following:

S. No.	Designation	Email ID	Helpline Number
1.	The Commissioner of Police, Delhi Police	cp.snsnshrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in	100
2.	The Divisional Commissioner, GNCTD	divcom@nic.in	1077
3.	The Chief Wildlife Warden, GNCTD	ccfgnctd@gmail.com	1800118600
4.	The Commissioner, North Delhi Municipal Corporation	commr-northdmc@mcd.nic.in	155304
5.	The Commissioner, South Delhi Municipal Corporation	commissioner-sdmc@mcd.nic.in	155305
6.	The Commissioner, East Delhi Municipal Corporation	commissioneredmc@gmail.com	155303

Note:-

The violation of directions issued under section 5 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, or the rules made thereunder shall be punishable under section 15 of the said Act which includes imprisonment upto five years and/or with fine which may be extended to Rs. One Lac or with both.

The above said NOTIFICATION is available at: www.environment.delhigovt.nic.in

Sd/-

Dr. K.S. Jayachandran

Special Secretary (Env.)

DIP/Shabdarth/0174/21-22

Peace in Af possible only through political solution: US

‘The US will continue to provide, humanitarian and security support to Afghan govt’

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US administration, led by President Joe Biden, believes lasting peace in Afghanistan is possible only through a political solution, the White House has said, noting the ongoing dialogue between the Government of the war-torn country and the Taliban.

"I would note that there are ongoing political negotiations and discussions that we certainly support between Afghan leaders, members of the Afghan Government, and the Taliban," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki told reporters at her daily news conference on Friday, amid a wave of violence from the Taliban.

"We believe a political solution is the only outcome to lasting peace in Afghanistan, but

we will continue to provide support to the Government in the form of humanitarian support, security support, training. We will also continue to encourage them to take a leading role in defending and protecting their own people," she said.

In an interview to MSNBC, Secretary of State Tony Blinken said the US is determined that Afghanistan does not become a training ground for terrorism directed against the United States or its allies and partners.

"That's exactly why we went there in the first place, which is important to remember. We were attacked on 9/11, we went to Afghanistan to get the folks — who attacked us — to bring them to justice. Osama bin Laden was brought to justice 10 years ago, and the group, al-Qaida, responsible

for those attacks has been dramatically diminished in terms of its capacity to attack anyone from Afghanistan," he said.

"We're going to make sure that we keep our eyes on that. If we see the threat re-emerging, we're going to be in a position to take action against it. But that's why we were there, and now we're 20 years and a trillion dollars and thousands of Americans lost later in that campaign. I think the reason we went there is what we have to keep the focus on, and we've largely succeeded in doing what we needed to do," Blinken said.

The United States, he said, does have deep concerns about the actions the Taliban is taking, indicating that it may be trying to take the country by force.

Senior American military

officers have admitted that the Taliban has gained "strategic momentum," with their forces now controlling about half of Afghanistan's more than 400 district centres.

Blinken said Afghanistan would become a pariah state, if the Taliban took it by force.

"It would not get the assistance that it's looking for and that the Taliban says it wants if it has any responsibility for the country. It would not get the support from the international

community that it says it wants. We're actively engaged in diplomacy because there is no military solution to this conflict that's been going on for more than 40 years in Afghanistan, and we're working to try to bring that to an end," he said.

US Central Command, which is in charge of Afghanistan, said recently that the withdrawal of US forces is more than 95 per cent complete.

Pak NSA, ISI chief likely to visit US next week for talks on Afghanistan: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf and ISI chief Lt Gen Faiz Hameed are likely to visit the US next week for talks with their American counterparts on the situation in Afghanistan as part of Washington's diplomatic efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful transfer of power in the war-torn nation, according to a media report.

The efforts also include visits by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to New Delhi and Kabul for talks aimed at formulating a regional response to the Afghan crisis, the Dawn newspaper reported from

Washington while quoting diplomatic sources.

The trip of Yusuf and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General Lt Gen Hameed was part of these diplomatic efforts, it said.

"Pakistan has a key role in a new US diplomatic offensive aimed at ensuring a peaceful transfer of power in Afghanistan," diplomatic sources told the newspaper on Friday. Under a deal with the Taliban, the US and its NATO allies agreed to withdraw all troops in return for a commitment by the militants that they would prevent extremist groups from operating in areas they control.

Pakistan deploys regular troops along Afghan border: Report

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has deployed regular troops at forward positions along the Afghan border due to the fluid security situation in the neighbouring war-torn country in the wake of the withdrawal of American and NATO troops, a media report said on Saturday.

Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said that Pakistan Army soldiers have replaced the Frontier Constabulary (FC), Levies Force and other militias from the frontline positions, the Dawn newspaper reported.

The US and NATO are on the verge of completing their final troops withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Ahmed said the FC Balochistan and other militias working under the interior ministry had been called back from border patrolling. "Now regular army troops are manning the border after replacing the paramilitary forces," the minister said, adding the decision had been made in wake of the volatile situation across the border.

Ahmed said the situation not only demanded containment of the influx of refugees from Afghanistan but also the

entry of armed army personnel and militants into Pakistan.

"Paramilitary troops including the Frontier Constabulary, Levies, Rangers are deployed at the borders to deal with regular issues including illegal border crossing, smuggling etc," the minister was quoted as saying in the report.

"However, the current volatile situation (in Afghanistan) demands that regular military troops be deployed along the border," he said. Military spokesperson Major General Babar Iftikhar recently told a TV channel that troops were manning the border and the move would help prevent escalation of conflict from the Afghan soil or airspace to the Pakistani side.

Meanwhile, sources in the armed forces told the newspaper that the most serious challenge in the current scenario was not just the inflow of refugees or any infiltrators in the garb of refugees but the movement of Afghan army personnel or Taliban fighters.

"We have seen that more than 1,000 Afghan soldiers fled into Tajikistan early in July to escape clashes with the Taliban," an officer said. "But Taliban's presence in

the northern areas of Afghanistan is not as strong as it is in the areas bordering Pakistan. Therefore, if Afghan army troops enter Pakistan while fleeing fighting, there are chances that Taliban would follow them and the conflict would spill over inside Pakistan, and it could spread to the mainland too," the officer added.

Pakistan and Afghanistan have already traded barbs last week after the Taliban took control of the Spin Boldak border crossing, and the Afghan Air Force wanted to attack Taliban positions from the Pakistani side, which was not allowed by Islamabad.

"Pakistan does not want to see any such situation when the Afghan air force might use our airspace without permission to attack Taliban and in retaliation the militants attack Pakistani positions creating a new issue," the officer said.

Meanwhile, responding to a question, the interior minister said that the fight inside Afghanistan was their internal matter and Pakistan was not taking any side and had no favourites.

"It is time that the Afghan politicians and their military leadership learn to deal with their issues," Ahmed said.

GLOBE TROTTER

BANDITS KILL 4 IRANIAN TROOPS NEAR PAK BORDER

Tehran: Armed bandits killed four members of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guard in fighting in a southern province, the official IRNA news agency reported Saturday. The report said the clash between Guard members and the bandits happened Friday night in the Gounic district of Sistan and Baluchistan province. The site of the fighting is some 1,250 kilometers (775 miles) southeast of the capital Tehran. It did not elaborate.

14 KILLED IN WAREHOUSE FIRE IN CHINA

Beijing: Fourteen people died and 26 others were injured after a fire broke out at a warehouse in northeast China's Jilin province on Saturday, local authorities said. The accident happened at a logistic warehouse in Jingyue high-tech industrial development zone at Jilin province's capital Changchun, according to officials with the zone. Fourteen people were confirmed dead in the blaze, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Among the 26 injured, 12 were in severe condition, it said.

US AIRSTRIKE IN SOMALIA IS 2ND THIS WEEK

Washington: For the second time this week, US on Friday conducted an airstrike against the al-Shabab extremist group in Somalia. The earlier strike, on Tuesday, was the first in Somalia since President Joe Biden took office in January. In a brief statement, the Pentagon said the attack was conducted in support of Somali partner forces, and thus was allowed under existing congressional authorization for the use of military force. A Pentagon spokeswoman, Cindi King, said the airstrike was coordinated with the Somali government and took place in the Galmudug area in central



Firefighters light a backfire to stop the Dixie Fire from spreading near Prattville in Plumas County, Calif. on Friday

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping underlined the importance of long-term stability and prosperity in Tibet during a meeting with top military officials in Lhasa, the state media reported on Saturday, a day after he made a previously unannounced visit to the strategically important region, including to Nyingchi, a town close to the border with Arunachal Pradesh.

Xi, also General Secretary of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) and Chairman of the Central Military Commission, met top officials of the Tibet Military Command of the People's Liberation Army, guarding China's border with India in Arunachal



Chinese President Xi Jinping visits the Drepung Monastery located in the western suburbs of Lhasa, southwestern China's Tibet Autonomous Region on Thursday AP

Pradesh, and also called for "fully strengthening the work of training soldiers and war preparation," the Global Times reported.

Xi, 68, made his first visit

to Tibet as President from Wednesday to Friday. But his important visit was kept under wraps by China's official media till the end of the tour on Friday due to the sensitivities

of the trip. As part of his trip, he first went to Nyingchi, a strategically located town close to the border with Arunachal Pradesh. On Thursday, Xi went to Nyingchi Railway Station, learning about the overall design of the Sichuan-Tibet Railway and how the Lhasa-Nyingchi section has been operated since June 25.

It was the first time in recent years, a top Chinese leader visited the Tibetan border town. From there he went to the provincial capital Lhasa by the recently launched high-speed train.

He wound up his visit to the politically sensitive Himalayan region on Friday by meeting "representatives of troops stationed in Tibet."

"Xi met with representa-

tives of troops stationed in Tibet, calling for efforts to strengthen military training and preparedness in all aspects and make contributions to the lasting stability, prosperity and development of Tibet," the state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

However, the CPC-run tabloid Global Times said that Xi in his meeting with the PLA representatives "stressed that the local troops should fully strengthen the work of training soldiers and war preparation and contribute positive strength to promote the long-term stability and prosperity of Tibet."

Xi's first visit to Tibet took place amidst the current India-China military tensions in eastern Ladakh.

Biden stumps for McAuliffe in early test of political clout

AP ■ ARLINGTON

President Joe Biden led the

kind of campaign rally that was impossible last year because of the pandemic, speaking before nearly 3,000 people in support of a fellow moderate Democrat whose race for Virginia governor could serve as a test of Biden's own strength and coattails.

Biden motorcaded across the Potomac River Friday night

to back Terry McAuliffe, a former governor looking for a second term whose centrist leanings in many ways mirror those of the president. The race is seen as an early measure of voters' judgment on Democratic control of all branches of the federal government.

The president stood before an enthusiastic and largely unmasked crowd who gathered around a park pavilion and playground on a warm July

night. He emphasized that he shared the same vision as McAuliffe about the need for greater public investments in order to drive economic growth. But Biden was also focused on the political stakes.

"You're not gonna find anyone, I mean anyone, who knows how to get more done for Virginia than Terry," Biden said. "Off-year election, the country's looking. This is a big deal."



COUNCIL OF ARCHITECTURE
A Statutory Authority of Government of India
India Habitat Centre, Core 6A, 1st Floor, Lodhi Road,
New Delhi-110003



NATA 2021

EXAMINATION NOTICE: NATA-2021

Subject:- Announcement of Third Test of NATA-2021

The Council of Architecture is pleased to announce that the Third Test of National Aptitude Test in Architecture (NATA) 2021 shall be conducted on September 3, 2021.

As per the Regulations of 2020, all candidates need to qualify an Aptitude Test conducted by the Council (i.e. NATA) for admission to B.Arch. course. Therefore, all candidates who have passed in any other aptitude test in Architecture conducted by other authorities shall also be required to qualify NATA in order to be eligible for admission to the B.Arch. course.

As per NATA 2021 Brochure, a candidate shall be allowed to appear for NATA 2021 only for a maximum of two times. Therefore, candidates who have not appeared in either one or both tests of NATA are eligible to register and appear for Third NATA Test. Further, those candidates who, after registering themselves for NATA, could not appear or remained absent in the either one or both tests of NATA due to any reason, may also register for Third NATA Test.

The NATA portal shall also be opened shortly to facilitate the students to register for Third NATA Test. The NATA-2021 Brochure with details of registration & other important dates for Third test shall be soon uploaded on the websites www.nata.in and www.coa.gov.in.

The eligible candidates desirous to take admission into 1st year of 5-year B.Arch. degree course are advised to register themselves for Third Test of NATA-2021.

**July 25, 2021
New Delhi**

Registrar



UJVNL Limited
H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, G.M.S. Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808, Fax: 0135-2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com

Letter No: 533 NOTICE INVITING TENDER Date: 24.07.2021

For and on behalf of UJVNL Ltd, Executive Engineer (Civil), Pashulok Barrage Rishikesh, invites sealed & separate tenders from interested contractors for following works:-

NIT No. 06/2021-22/EE(C)/Pashulok Barrage:- Operation and Maintenance of UJVNL Officer Transit Camp and office of General Manager (SHP) at Maneri Bhal-II Colony, Rishikesh.

NIT No. 07/2021-22/EE(C)/Pashulok Barrage:- Annual Civil Maintenance & Repair Works of Virbhadra Barrage Premises at Rishikesh.

NIT No. 08/2021-22/EE(C)/Pashulok Barrage :- Annual Maintenance & Repair Works of Afflux Bundha, Silt Ejector and Appurtenant Structure Virbhadra Barrage at Rishikesh.

NIT No. 09/2021-22/EE(C)/Pashulok Barrage :- Annual Upkeep Works of the Office of General Manager (CDH&NP) at New Hydrel Colony, Pashulok-Rishikesh.

Estimated Value of Tender:- Rs.9.90 Lakh, Rs. 17.94 Lakh, Rs. 24.70 Lakh & Rs. 7.19 Lakh respectively.

Date of availability of bid document on website:- 26 July, 2021 from 17:00 Hrs. (IST)

Last Date for Submission of Tender:- 17 August, 2021 upto 14:00 Hrs. (IST).

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website "www.ujvnl.com"

Executive Engineer (Civil)

"AVOID WASTEFUL USE OF ELECTRICITY"

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Chintels India Limited is in the process of undertaking of development of a Group Housing Colony in Sector 109, Gurugram, over an area measuring 10.41875 acres in the revenue estate of village Babupur in accordance with the provision of Licence No.250 of 2007 dated 02-11-2007 granted by the Director General, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh.

And whereas, several individuals have made bookings/entered into purchase agreement for allotment of plot/property in the said colony (hereinafter referred to as allottees).

And whereas the assignment of Joint Development Rights/Marketing Rights for the said colony is now proposed to M/s Almond Infrabuild Pvt. Ltd.

And whereas the o/o Director General, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has required seeking of any objections against the assignment of Joint Development Rights/Marketing Rights in the licence as a pre-condition for allowing such a proposal.

Accordingly, vide this public notice, objections are hereby invited from any of the allottees in the said colony on the proposed assignment of Joint Development Rights/Marketing Rights in the licence.

Any allottee having any objection may file his objection in the o/o Senior Town Planner, Sector 14, Gurugram, Haryana or in our corporate office within 30 days of the publication of this notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to the proposed assignment of Joint Development Rights/Marketing Rights in the licence.

Place: Gurugram For Chintel India Limited

Dated: 25.07.2021 Authorised Signatory

JUSTRIDE ENTERPRISES LIMITED
CIN: L74899DL1967PLC004704

Reg. Off.: Flat No.133, C4E, Pocket No.11, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058;
Email ID: justridelimited@gmail.com; **Website:** www.justrideenterprises.in; **Contact:** 8800300490

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION
Notice is hereby given that the 54th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of Justride Enterprises Limited ("Company") will be held on Monday, August 16, 2021 at 10:00 AM through video conference (VC) / other audio-visual means (OAVM), to transact the businesses as set out in the Notice of AGM in compliance with the applicable provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 (Act) and Rules framed thereunder and the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (Listing Regulations) read with General Circular Nos.14/2020 (dated 8th April 2020), 17/2020 (13th April 2020), 20/2020 (dated 5th May 2020) and 22/2020 (dated June 15, 2020), respectively, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs ("MCA Circulars") and Circular No. SEBI/HO/CFD/CMD1-CIR/P/2020/79 dated 12th May 2020 issued by the Securities and Exchange Board of India ("SEBI Circular"), without the physical presence of the Members at a common venue. In compliance with the said MCA Circulars read with the SEBI Circular dated 12th May, 2020, electronic copies of the Notice of AGM and Annual Report for the financial year ended on 31st March, 2020 have been sent on July 24, 2021 to all the members, whose email IDs are registered with the Company's Depository Participant(s). Please note that the requirement of sending physical copy of the Notice of the 54th AGM and Annual Report to the Members have been dispensed with vide MCA Circular/sand SEBI Circular. The Notice and the Annual Report will also be available on the website of the Company www.justrideenterprises.in, website of Central Depository Services (India) Limited ("CDSL") www.evotingindia.com and on the website(s) of the stock exchanges i.e. BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com and the Company's shares are listed. Members, who are holding shares in physical/electronic form and their e-mail addresses are not registered with the Company/their respective Depository Participants, are requested to register their e-mail addresses at the earliest by sending scanned copy of a duly signed letter by the Member(s) mentioning their name, complete address, folio number, number of shares held with the Company along with self-attested scanned copy of the PAN Card and self-attested scanned copy of any one of the following documents viz., Aadhar Card, Driving License, Election Card, Passport, utility bill or any other Govt. document in support of the address proof of the Member as registered with the Company for receiving the Annual Report 2019-20 along with AGM Notice by email to justridelimited@gmail.com. Members holding shares in demat form can update their email address with their Depository Participants.

The notice of the AGM contains the instructions regarding the manner in which the shareholders can cast their vote through remote e-voting or by e-voting at the time of AGM and join the AGM through video conference (VC)/other audio-visual means (OAVM)

The members holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, as on the cut-off date i.e. Monday, August 09, 2021, may cast their vote electronically on the Ordinary Businesses as set out in the Notice of AGM through electronic voting systems of CDSL. All the members are informed that:

- The Ordinary Businesses as set out in the Notice of AGM will be transacted through voting by electronic means;
- The remote e-voting shall commence on Friday, August 13, 2021 at 09:00 AM (IST);
- The remote e-voting shall end on Sunday, August 15, 2021 at 05:00 PM (IST);
- The cut-off date for determining the eligibility to vote by electronic means or at the AGM is Monday, August 09, 2021 and a person who is not a Member as on the cut off date should treat this Notice for information purposes only;
- Person, who acquires shares of the Company and become member of the Company after sending of the Notice of AGM and holding shares and eligible to vote, can follow the process for generating the login ID and password as provided in the Notice of the AGM. If such a person is already registered with CDSL for a-voting, existing user ID and password can be used for casting vote;
- Members may note that, a) the remote e-voting module shall be disabled by the CDSL after the aforesaid date and time for voting and once the vote on a resolution is casted by the member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently; b) the members who have casted their vote by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again; c) the facility for voting through electronic mode shall be made available at the AGM; and d) a person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting at the AGM.

In case of any queries including issues and concerns related to remote e-voting and voting at AGM, you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Shareholders and e-voting user manual for Shareholders available at the download section of CDSL at www.evotingindia.com or call on toll free no.: 022-23058738 and 22-23058542-43 or send a request at helpdesk.evoting@cdsindia.com or contact Mr. Rakesh Dalvi, Sr. Manager, (CDSL) Central Depository Services (India) Limited, A Wing, 25th Floor, Marathon Futurex, Mafatlal Mill Compounds, N.M. Joshi Marg, Lower Parel (East), Mumbai - 400013 or send an email to helpdesk.evoting@cdsindia.com or call on 022-23058542/43, who will also address the grievances connected with the voting by electronic means.

**By order of the Board of Directors
For Justride Enterprises Limited**

Date : July 25, 2021
Place : New Delhi

Sd/-
Surya Kumar
(DIN: 0796100)

AGR dues no subject matter of any future litigation: SC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) related dues payable by telecom majors, including Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, cannot be a subject matter of any future litigation, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao stated this while dismissing the plea of telcos seeking rectification of alleged errors in the calculation of AGR.

The top court said the dispute relating to AGR has been pending in courts for a very long period of time and the dues payable by TSPs (Telecom Service Providers) cannot be the subject matter of any future litigation.

It said there is no room for any doubt from the perusal of the earlier judgement dated September 1, 2020 with respect to this court entertaining any application for altering the AGR dues of the TSPs.

The court said that issues concerning the ambit of proceedings under Section 18 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 in relation to spectrum, the manner in which payment has to be made by and liabilities apportioned between the TSPs in case of spectrum sharing and spectrum trading, “with which we are not concerned in these Applications”,

were also dealt with in its judgment dated September 1, 2020

The telecom companies had pleaded before the apex court that arithmetical “errors” in the calculation be rectified and claimed there were cases of duplication of entries.

“Though these applications appear to be innocuous at first blush, the end result of the relief sought by the applicants in the guise of correction or rectification of the defects or arithmetical errors in the calculation of AGR dues, would be recalculation which would amount to the AGR dues, as specified in the order of this Court dated July 20, 2020, being altered.

The dispute relating to AGR dues had remained pending in courts for a very long period of time and bearing this in mind, this Court was at pains to emphasise, at the cost of repetition, that the AGR dues payable by TSPs cannot be the subject matter of any future litigation,” the bench also comprising justices S A Nazeer and M R Shah said.

The apex court said the order dated July 20, 2020 makes it clear that there is no scope for any recalculation/re-computation of AGR dues.

“Even at the time of passing of the order dated July 20, 2020, an attempt was made to

seek recalculation and reassessment, as recorded in the order, which was rejected by this Court outright,” the bench said.

The top court in September last year had given a time period of 10 years to telecom service providers struggling to pay Rs 93,520 crores of AGR-related dues to clear their outstanding amount to the government.

During the hearing on the applications on July 19, the bench had referred to an earlier order passed by the apex court in the matter and observed that it said no reassessment of AGR-related dues can be done.

One of the lawyers representing a telecom firm had contended that they were not blaming the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for it as there are arithmetical entries and they want to place the entries before the department so that they can reconsider it.

In its September last year order, the apex court had said that telecom operators shall make the payment of 10 per cent of the total dues as demanded by the DoT by March 31, 2021 and the rest amount to be paid in yearly installments commencing from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2031.

India in exciting phase of growth: Paytm CEO

EXPECTED TO BECOME USD 5 TRN ECONOMY IN 5-10 YEARS

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The country is in an exciting phase of growth and the economy is expected to add USD 2.5 trillion in the next 5-10 years, Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said on Saturday.

“If this country’s economy is USD 2.5 trillion today. In next 5-10 years, you will see another USD 2.5 trillion. It took 70 years for us to make it USD 2.5 trillion... Now only in 10 years all that history will be recreated and doubled.

“It’s an amazing, inspiring moment for us to be in India and lucky to be in India,” Sharma said while speaking at a 2-day virtual youth conclave organised by IMC Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He said one should never hesitate to do what they feel very strongly about even if it seems small.

“When somebody makes you feel that you’re solo. That’s just the way you handle the



adversity.

And once you are a success, all these adversities will become the folklores, so you should never feel bad about it,” he added.

Meanwhile, Arin Capital Chairman Mohandas Pai in another session of the conclave said, new business models can come up as the wide distribution network is no longer the limiting factor for businesses.

“So your business models can come up, you can start a business and produce something in India and sell to the whole world cheaply,” he added.

He said through technology the disadvantage and advantage of starting a business in any country no longer exist.

India will continue to attract high foreign investments: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday expressed confidence that India will continue to attract high foreign direct investment (FDIs) in the current financial year.

He said India has received highest ever FDI in the Covid-impacted 2020, in contrast with a shrinkage in investment inflows globally.

In 2020-21, FDI into the country grew by 19 per cent to USD 59.63 billion. Total FDI, including equity, re-invested earnings and capital, rose 10 per cent to USD 81.72 billion during 2020-21 as against USD 74.39 billion in 2019-20.

“This year, we are very confident that we will continue this streak of seven continuous years of historic highs in our foreign investments,” Goyal said at the CII-Horasis India Meeting webinar.

Similarly, he said, India’s exports too are recording healthy growth and would reach USD 400 billion by the end of the current financial year.

During July 1-21, export crossed USD 22 billion and it is “poised to cross USD 32-33 billion by end of the month (July), which means our run rate is on track to achieve USD 400 billion of exports target for the first time ever”.

Further, he said that cur-



rently India is in talks with 16 countries including the UK, the EU, Australia, Canada, and the UAE for trade agreements.

With some countries, India is working for early harvest agreements which will allow the country to quickly identify areas of mutual interest and progress negotiations faster towards a comprehensive economic partnership agreement, or FTAs, the minister said. “We have focused our efforts on a few very promising agreements where I can clearly see huge comparative advantages for India to get market access and the ability to trade both in goods and services in a much bigger way. The UK, EU, Australia, Canada, UAE are countries with whom we can very quickly expand our discussions and engagements,” he added.

India has inked FTAs with several countries, including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and ASEAN members.

Under such agreements, two trading partners significantly reduce or eliminate import/customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them.

Talking about vaccination, he said the government had permitted the private sector to procure 25 per cent of Covid-19 vaccines but

they are not buying.

“CII should take a lead and get all of you to ensure that you take that 25 per cent vaccines... Some industry group said we will do one crore vaccinations...Nobody has gone to Bihar, North East, Jharkhand to run campaigns to remove vaccine hesitancy,” he said.

Open air travel for inoculated passengers: IATA

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

International air travel should be opened up for at least fully vaccinated air passengers, global airlines’ association IATA told IANS.As per the association, a comprehensive system should be set in place that allows hassle free travel for those inoculated. Moreover, the system should also ensure testing and verification of those passengers who have not been inoculated but without increasing the already set restrictions. “Vaccination and testing have a role to play in the recovery of international trav-

el. It is not an option to wait for vaccines to be widely available before reopening borders. The global vaccine roll-out is likely to take time,” said Conrad Clifford, IATA’s Deputy Director General and Regional Vice President for Asia Pacific. “That’s why testing is the alternative for those who do not have access to vaccines or are unable to be vaccinated for various reasons.”

According to Clifford, it is not sustainable to maintain a zero case load approach, especially with scientists believing that Covid-19 will end up becoming endemic.

Honest taxpayers deserve to be recognised for paying due share of taxes: Sitharaman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday said honest taxpayers deserve to be recognised for dutifully paying their due share of taxes and appreciated the Income Tax Department for successful implementation of various reforms.

In her message to the I-T Department on the 161st anniversary of Income Tax Day, she complimented the department for continuing to work towards simplifying its procedures and processes, and making its functioning hassle-free, fair and transparent.

“The minister observed that the honest taxpayers deserve to be recognized for the contribution they are making to the progress of the nation by dutifully paying their due share of taxes... She also lauded tax-

payers for discharging their compliance obligations despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic,” an official statement said.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary observed that most of the processes and compliance requirements have been shifted to online platforms and the need for taxpayers to physical visit tax offices has been eliminated or minimized.

He highlighted the fact that the interaction with taxpayers is now characterized by a spirit of trust and respect, relying more on voluntary compliance.

Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj also complimented the department for having done well in adapting itself to the emergent changes in the economy and having been able to achieve a healthy growth in tax

collections.

He also appreciated the initiatives undertaken by the department to reorient its approach towards revenue collection, making its functioning trust-based and taxpayer-centric.

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Chairman J B Mohapatra lauded the tax officers for their collective efforts and effectively fulfilling their twin role as the revenue earning arm of the nation and provider of taxpayer services.

Referring to the larger and far-reaching policy measures like ‘Honouring the Honest’, Faceless Regime and adoption of the Taxpayers’ Charter, he noted that these initiatives have made the departmental functioning more transparent, objective and taxpayer-friendly.

7-day relief: No revision in fuel prices in a week

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Oil marketing companies (OMC) continued to pause fuel price revision for seven consecutive days, the longest period in weeks, as the global development on oil production and rising US inventories softened crude and product rates.

However, they stopped short of reducing the retail price of petrol and diesel as more time will be required to study oil price movement before any downward revision.

Already, crude has firmed a bit for last few days and this could prevent price cut by the OMCs.

With no change in prices on Saturday, in the national capital petrol continues to be sold for Rs 101.84 per litre, while diesel remains at the unchanged price of Rs 89.87 a litre.

The pump price of fuel has been static since Sunday. It last increased on July 17 with petrol being revised upwards by 30 paise per litre, while diesel prices remained unchanged. One of the main reasons for pause in fuel price rise is an over 10 per cent fall seen in global oil prices with benchmark crude sliding to \$69 a barrel from a high of over \$77 barrel just a few weeks ago. It had again risen to over \$74 a barrel on strong demand projections.

SBI opens branch in President's Estate

New Delhi:The country’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) on Saturday opened a branch at President’s Estate. The branch was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind along with First Lady Savita Kovind, in the presence of Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, SBI said in a statement.The branch will provide all types of banking services including safe deposit lockers to the residents of President’s Estate, it said.Secretary to the President K D Tripathi, SBI Chairman Dinesh Khara and other senior officials of the bank were also present at the inauguration ceremony, it said.This branch at President’s Estate is a jewel in the crown for SBI and will offer a convenient and seamless banking experience to all the customers, said Khara. **PTI**

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, DELHI.
4th Floor Jeevan Tara Building Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110001.

OA NO 286/2020
DATE: : 01.07.2021

AXIS BANK LTD.
...APPLICANT
VERSUS
SANJEEV ARORA & ORS.
...RESPONDENT

TO, DEFENDANT
1 Rajeev Arora, House No. J-13 Govindpuram Block J, PS Kavi Nagar, Ghaziabad-201002
2. Three Platinum Softex Pvt. Ltd. A-169 2nd Floor, Mandawali Fazalpur Ganga Ram New Delhi-52. Also at: C-5640, Sector-62, Near Fortis Hospital Noida UP-201301

Whereas the above named applicant(s) has / have instituted a case for recovery of Rs 97,84,026/- (RUPEE Ninety Seven Lakh Eighty Four Thousand and Twenty Six ONLY) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in the ordinary way therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on **10.08.2021 At 10.30 A.M**

Take notice that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

By Order of the Tribunal
For Registrar DRT-II, Delhi

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Srl. No. (1) E-Tender No. DRM-ENG-G-BSP-T-51-21-22, Date. 19/07/2021.

Work: Upgradation of Platform Surface of Shahdol and Anuppur stations. Provision of toilet with water supply in CSM/SM's Panel room at Vilayatkhala, Lorha and Mudaria & Creation of siding facilities for working of heavy duty Rial Grinding Machine (RGM) at Burhar, Nowrozabad, Umaria & Rupnod stations under the jurisdictions of Sr. DEN/North, Bilaspur. **Tender Value (In Rs.): 1,78,95,635.56/- EMD (In Rs.): 00.00/- Completion Period: 12 Months.**

Start date of Submission of Tender: From 11:00 hrs. on 02.08.2021. Last date of Submission of Tender: Upto 11:00 hrs. on 16.08.2021

The complete information of above e-Tender Notices is available over websites **https://www Ireps.gov.in** Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above Tenders.

Div. Railway Manager (Engg.) CPR/10/106 S.E.C. Railway/BSP
f South East Central Railway @SecRail

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON

**TOTA RAM**

General public is here by informed that this person namely Tota Ram S/o Kale Ram R/o H.No. B-391, Gali No. 8, S.B.S. Colony, Karawal Nagar, Delhi **Age : About 95 years, Height : 5'5", Face : Round, Build : Thin, Complexion :** Shallow, wearing blue colour shirt, white colour lower and slipper in feet, has been missing since 09.07.2021 from his house. In this regard DD No. 78-A dated 10.07.2021 has been lodged at P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: ctc@cbi.gov.in SHO - P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi
Website: http://cbi.nic.in Tel. No: 011-9205832616,
Fax: 24368639, 8750870728
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

DPB/INZ/21

INDO COTSPIN LIMITED				
REGD. OFFICE : 78 K.M. MILE STONE, G.T. ROAD, N.H.-1, VILLAGE JATTI PUR, POST BOX NO. 3, POST OFFICE SAMALKHA, PANIPAT -132103 CIN:- L111HR1995PLC02541 Website:www.indocotspin.com Email ID:raipalaggarwal12000@yahoo.com Statement of Standalone Un-audited Financial Results for the Quarter Ended June 30, 2021				
PARTICULARS	3 MONTHS ENDED	YEAR TO DATE FIGURES FOR CURRENT PERIOD ENDED	3 MONTHS ENDED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR	CORRESPONDING 3 MONTHS ENDED IN THE PREVIOUS YEAR
	30/06/2021	31/03/2021	30/06/2020	
	Un-audited	Audited	Un-audited	
Total Income from operations (net)	150.54	816.08	123.84	
Net Profit/(Loss) from Ordinary activities after Tax	0.18	4.77	0.37	
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary Items)	0.18	4.77	0.37	
Paid Up Equity Share Capital	420.05	420.05	420.05	
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of Previous Year)	0.18	219.15	0.37	
Earnings Per Share (before Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each):Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.00	0.07	0.00	
Earnings Per Share (after Extraordinary Items) (of Rs. 10/- each):Basic and Diluted (in Rupees)	0.00	0.07	0.00	
NOTE: i) There is no qualification on the un-audit report for the quarter ended 30/06/2021 ii) The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The Full format of the Quarterly Financial Results is available on the Stock Exchange websites: www.bseindia.com , www.nseindia.com , www.cseindia.com , www.fseindia.com , www.sseindia.com , www.bmftradeindia.com , www.bseindia.com , www.nseindia.com , www.cseindia.com , www.fseindia.com , www.sseindia.com , www.bmftradeindia.com For Indo Cotspin Limited Sd/- Bal Krishan Aggarwal Managing Director DIN : 00456219				
Place: Panipat Date: 24/07/2021				

WESTERN RAILWAY			
E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE NO. S/28/2021 Date : 21.07.2021			
S.N.	Short Description of item	Quantity	T.O.D
771	Wood Based Resin	1000 Nos.	09.08.2021
772	Gear Case Complete	4 Nos.	09.08.2021
773	Washer for Dia 41 mm Pin	10000 Nos.	09.08.2021
774	Gangway Bridge Mounting Assly.	640 Nos.	09.08.2021
775	Set of Connection Strap Assly. for WAP4.	306 Set	09.08.2021
776	Roller Bearing	314 Nos.	10.08.2021
777	Filter Assly.	18 Nos.	11.08.2021
778	Plug Assly	1315 Set	11.08.2021
779	Track Feed Battery Charger	819 Nos.	12.08.2021
780	Tar Plastic Compound	6734 Kg	13.08.2021
781	VRLA Valve Regulated (Sealed) Lead Acid Battery 2V300AH	3028 Nos.	13.08.2021
782	Set of 35 mm NABO Brake Pads	2000 Nos.	13.08.2021
783	LMLA,Low Maintenance Lead Acid Secondary cells, 2V, 300AH.	3028 Nos.	16.08.2021
784	Set of Switches 6 A-250 V	16 Set	16.08.2021
785	R/M Paint Gentian Blue.	38620 Ltr.	18.08.2021
786	Single Bottle Vacuum Circuit Breaker.	150 Nos.	18.08.2021
787	VRLA Batteries of 48V-200AH	110 Set	19.08.2021
788	AOH Kit for Tapchanger	98 Set	19.08.2021
789	Gear Oil Optigear RMO	5063 Ltr.	19.08.2021
790	LMLA Secondary Cells 2V/200AH	1647 Nos.	25.08.2021
791	Main LED Signal Lighting Unit Red, Yellow, Green	5323 Nos.	26.08.2021
792	Wire 7 Strand Steel, Galvanised for Signaling Purpose	4594 Kg	30.08.2021
Regarding detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in . and www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in .			
0285 For Principal Chief Materials Manager			
Like us on : facebook.com/WesternRly Follow us on : twitter.com/WesternRly			

BRIEFS

Reliance Jio clocks strong subscriber adds in Q1
New Delhi:Jio's gross subscriber additions, though down 14 per cent QoQ, were still healthy at 26.7 million due to continued traction on new JioPhone offer, foreign brokerage, Jefferies said in a report. This along with lower churn, resulted in 14.3 million net additions in Q1. Assuming 0.6m additions on Jiofiber, Reliance Jio added 13.8m mobile subscriber on net basis which surprised positively given 1Q was impacted by Covid. “We expect Jio’s subscriber additions to remain robust led by recent capacity additions, JioPhone offers and launch of JioPhone Next”, the report said. Jio reiterated that its device and capacity strategy is in place to gain the next 200m subscribers. “We marginally tweak estimates to factor the results and see Jio gain 530m subscribers by Mar-24. Over FY21-24, we expect RJio to deliver 15% CAGR in revenues and 20% Cagr in profits. We maintain our valuation for RJio at US\$90bn”, the report said.

IMPROVING DEMAND TO TRIGGER TYRE INDUSTRY’S GROWTH
New Delhi:Improving demand along with stable competitive intensity, and peak capex is expected to trigger linear growth for the Indian Tyre industry. Accordingly, Motilal Oswal Financial Services said the Indian Tyre industry is expected to clock a 12 per cent CAGR over FY21-25E. Besides, MOFSL expects sustained recovery in demand from both replacement and OEM segment, coupled with increase in exports. “While OEM demand is expected to see a cyclical recovery over the next 2-3 years, replacement demand is expected to benefit from pent-up demand, import restrictions, and premiumization witnessed across the automotive segments in the last five years,” said MOFSL. In the last five years, demand environment was impacted by weak OEM volumes, a feeble economic environment, impact of GST, and higher imports.

ZEE MEDIA CORPORATION REPORTS ₹9.06 CR LOSS
New Delhi:Zee Media Corporation Ltd on Saturday reported a consolidated net loss of ₹9.06 crore for the quarter ended in June 2021 on account of exceptional items. The company had posted a net profit of ₹12.26 crore during the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal, Zee Media Corporation Ltd (ZMCL) said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations was up 28.79 per cent to ₹170.18 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 132.14 crore in the corresponding period of the previous fiscal.

GO FIRST OPERATES FIRST NIGHT FLIGHT FROM JAMMU TO DELHI
New Delhi:Budget airline Go First, formerly known as GoAir, has operated the first ever night flight from Jammu to Delhi. Accordingly, the flight ‘G8 196’ - took off at 8.00 p.m. on Friday and was operated on Airbus A320neo. “Going forward, Go First will operate scheduled flight from Jammu to Delhi and Srinagar.” “This heralds the beginning of a new era for the union territory that has long advocated the introduction of night flights for better connectivity with the rest of the country.” Notably, the airline, will operate four flights a week from Jammu on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday to Delhi and three flight from Jammu on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday to Srinagar, respectively. According to Kaushik Khona, Chief Executive Officer, Go First: “This initiative will assist the farming community and also strengthen the tourism sector, which plays a major role in the economic growth of the region.”

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian pharmaceutical Industry is expected to grow almost by three times to about 130 billion US dollars by 2030, Chairman of Dr Reddy’s Laboratories, K Satish Reddy said on Saturday. “If you see, currently it’s (pharmaceutical industry) about 42 billion dollars, half between the domestic sales, half between the exports. We expect that it will grow almost by three times in the coming decade, reaching almost 120 to 130 billion dollars by 2030. Truly, we believe that we are poised for a tremendous growth in the coming

decade,” he predicted. Reddy, Chairman of Board of Governors of NIPER-Hyderabad, was virtually addressing the 9th Convocation of the institute.

The government’s encouragement (‘Atma Nirbhar Bharat’ policy), a lot of reforms in the policy to incentivize the industry and thrust being given to innovation, among others, augur well for the industry, he said.

The Indian pharmaceutical industry worked continuously during the testing times of Covid-19 pandemic second wave to ensure the availability of life saving medicines.

Equities on tenterhooks: Covid concerns, Fed decision to induce caution

IANs ■ MUMBAI

India’s key equity indices are expected to maintain caution on the back of rising Covid cases globally as well as the rate decision of the US Fed during the upcoming week.

However, expectations of robust quarterly results along with hopes for an accelerated economic recovery will retain investors’ interest in the market.

“US Fed interest rate and progress in spread of Coronavirus and its variants will be watched keenly,” said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities.

“Nifty has formed lower top lower bottom on weekly charts compared to the previous week. Hence 15,962 resistance becomes an important determinant of the future direction.”

Besides, Jasani cited that as long as this level (15,962) is not breached, markets, sectors and stocks could undergo rotational profit taking.

Furthermore, the week ahead will witness the release of Q1FY22 corporate results from ICICI Bank, ITC, Indusind Bank, Axis Bank, L&T, Tata Motors, Kotak Bank, Dr Reddys, Maruti Suzuki.

“Decided in Rio Olympics itself that I will prove myself in Tokyo”

MIRABAI LIFTS WEIGHT OF A NATION

An Olympic medal finally around her neck, star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu on Saturday said she can finally take a break at home without worrying about training after managing just five trips to her place in Manipur in the last five years.

“I have just been home for five days in the past five years. Now I will go with this medal,” said Chanu, whose family is based in Nongpok Kakching village about 20 kilometres from Imphal.

“I will now go home and eat food made by my mother,” she added.

Chanu revealed that after the Rio Games debacle she changed her training and technique completely so that she could redeem herself in Tokyo. Competing in her second Olympics, Chanu claimed the Silver medal in the 49kg category with a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg). It was India's second Olympic medal in the sport after Karnam Malleswari's Bronze that came 21 years ago



Mirabai Chanu Saikhom competes in the women's 49kg weightlifting event at the 2020 Olympics on Saturday

PTI

at the Sydney Games.

“My dream of winning an Olympic medal has been fulfilled today. I tried a lot in Rio, put in a lot of effort but it was not my day then. I thought that day only that I will prove myself in Tokyo,” Chanu said during a virtual press conference.

Considered a strong medal contender five years ago in Rio as well, Chanu buckled under pressure in the women's 48kg event and failed to log a legitimate lift.

“I learnt a lot from that day — my training and technique was changed, we put in a lot of effort after that.

“I was very sad after Rio, there was a lot of pressure on me and I got nervous, I couldn't understand anything for days but then coach sir and the federation counselled me, told

me that I have a lot of potential,” she added.

Head coach Vijay Sharma revealed he was also under a lot of pressure after the disappointing outing in Rio.

“There was a lot of pressure on me after the Rio failure, we failed in a very important competition and we were expected to win then also,” Sharma said.

Determined to prove herself in the Tokyo Games, Chanu and Sharma changed the Manipuri's training, employing a more stringent regimen.

“After that we changed the training pattern and technique a lot. The result of which we saw in the 2017 in world championship, then we took the Gold in the 2018 Commonwealth Games. We won a medal in the 2019 world championship. We have been

growing and improving regularly.

“The lesson we learnt was that we need a lot of determination and discipline. I worked with that and Mira partnered me.

“She hasn't done anything but eat, sleep and train in the last five years. It took us 2.5 years instead of 1.5 for the Olympic qualification because of coronavirus. Overall the result of the journey is that we are sitting here today with the medal.”

The Manipuri's sole focus for the past five years was on winning a medal at the Olympics and that required several sacrifices including staying away from her family.

The efforts paid off as Chanu went on to win the world championship in 2017 following it with a Gold at the

“Could not have asked for a happier start to @Tokyo2020! India is elated by @mirabai_chanu's stupendous performance. Congratulations to her for winning the Silver medal in weightlifting. Her success motivates every Indian. #Cheer4India #Tokyo2020.”

—PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

“Many many Congratulations to @mirabai_chanu on winning India's first medal at #Tokyo2020. Such An inspiring performance that will be remembered for a long time to come and will inspire generations. Well done.”

— ABHINAV BINDRA

“Congratulations for a beautiful opening on medal tally @mirabai_chanu. This Second place medal medal is a morale boost for our Indian contingent. Thank you for a spectacular performance..... jai hind.”

— BAJRANG PUNIA

2018 Commonwealth Games.

At the 2019 Asian championship she picked up a Bronze in clean and jerk where medals are awarded separately for snatch, clean and jerk, and total lift.

Ahead of the Tokyo Games, the Khel Ratna awardee had created a world record in clean and jerk at the 2020 Asian championship earlier this year.

Chanu hoped her exploits in the international arena and the Olympics win can inspire more girls to take up the sport specially weightlifting.

“There will be change, there are few girls in weightlifting right now but I hope many will be inspired by me and will feel they can also achieve something in the sport.”

Mirabai's mother in tears as daughter sports 'good luck' earrings she gifted

New Delhi: A historic Silver medal and a radiant smile were not the only eye-catching things about Mirabai Chanu on Saturday in Tokyo, her gold earrings shaped like Olympic rings were as striking, a gift from her mother who sold her own jewellery for them five years ago.

The hope was that the earrings would bring her “good luck”. It didn't happen in the Rio 2016 Games but Chanu made the little sacrifice count in Tokyo on Saturday morning with a Silver medal and Saikhom Ongbi Tombi Leima has struggled to stop her tears from flowing ever since.

“I saw the earrings on TV, I gave them to her in 2016 before the (Rio) Olympics. I have made it for her from the gold pieces and savings I have so that it brings luck and success,” Leima said from her home in Manipur where a considerable number of relatives, friends and well-wishers gathered to watch Chanu script history in Tokyo.

“I was in tears seeing it and also during the moment she won the medal. Her father (Saikhom Kriti Meitei) was also in tears. Tears of joy. All her hard work has led to the success.”

The Chanu household at Nongpok Kakching village, around 25km from state capital Imphal, visitors had been trickling in since Friday despite the curfew caused in part by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“She had told us she will win Gold or at least a medal. So, everybody was waiting for it to happen. Many of our relatives who lived far came last evening. They stayed overnight with us,” Chanu's mother said.



Family members and neighbours of Mirabai Chanu gather together to watch her lift

@Media_SAI

“Many came this morning and the people of the locality also thronged. So, we have brought out the television to the verandah and around 50 people were there to watch Mirabai in Tokyo. Many sat at the front courtyard. So, it was a kind of festival.

The Gold they had wished for didn't come but the Silver was enough to send a packed courtyard, glued to the TV, into frenzy as the tense little crowd broke into celebrations, unclenching their fists and clapping frantically.

Chanu was on video call with her family from the weightlifting arena in Tokyo before her event began and she had sought blessings from her parents.

“She (Chanu) rarely comes home (because of training) and so we have



made a Whatsapp group to communicate with each other,” said Chanu's cousin Aroshini.

“This morning, she had a video call with all of us and she bowed down and sought blessings from her parents.

“She said ‘bless me to win a Gold medal for the country’. They gave their blessings. It was a touching moment.”

Amit Shah, NE CMs give standing ovation to Mirabai

Shillong: Union Minister Amit Shah and Chief Ministers of all eight North Eastern states on Saturday gave a standing ovation to Mirabai Chanu who took home India's first Olympic medal in weightlifting at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics, officials said.

Manipur Chief Minister Biren Singh broke the news during the meeting which was chaired by the Union Home Minister following which everyone in the meeting gave the standing ovation with pride, they said. Singh also announced a ₹1 crore

package besides other perks an Olympian enjoys besides reserving a special post for the 26 year old Manipur woman.

All eight CMs of the Northeast are attending a meeting presided over by Shah in Meghalaya's capital Shillong.

Manika, Mukherjee off to promising start

Tokyo: India's slim hopes for a table tennis medal in mixed doubles vanished in no time but Manika Batra and Sushritha Mukherjee made promising starts to their women's singles campaign on Saturday.

The start to India's table tennis campaign was disappointing with Sharath Kamal and Manika losing 0-4 to the third seeds Lin Yu-jun and Cheng I-Ching of Chinese Taipei in the mixed doubles round of 16.

However, world number 62 Manika returned to beat 94th-ranked Tin-Tin Ho of Britain 4-0 in her singles opener while 98th-ranked Sushritha made a strong impression on

her Olympics debut with a come from behind 4-3 win against 78th-ranked Linda Bergstrom of Sweden.

Mukherjee play Portugal's Fu Yu in the second round while Manika takes on Ukraine's Margaryta Pesotska.

Mukherjee showed remarkable grit to down her Swedish opponent after trailing 1-3 in the best of seven affair. She won 5-11, 11-9, 11-13, 9-11, 11-3, 11-9, 11-5.

Earlier in the mixed doubles, Sharath and Manika had to make all chances count against a superior opponent from Chinese Taipei but they couldn't do so after leading 5-1 and 5-3 in the first two games. In the end, it was a comfortable 11-8, 11-6, 11-5, 11-4 win for Lin and Cheng.

Manpreet & Co start with win, women's lose

Tokyo: Harmanpreet Singh scored a brace and veteran goalkeeper P R Sreejesh stood like a wall in the closing minutes as the Indian men's hockey team overcame a late surge from New Zealand to eke out a close 3-2 win in its opening Olympic Games match on Saturday.

Aside from Harmanpreet (26th and 33rd minutes), Rupinder Pal Singh (10th) was the other goal-getter for the eight-time former champions, currently ranked fourth in the world, in the Pool A match at the Oi hockey stadium.

For the eighth-ranked New Zealand, Kane Russell scored from a penalty corner in the sixth minute before Stephen Jenness (43rd minute) reduced the margin of defeat later in the match.

India will next play mighty Australia on Sunday. The Kookaburras beat hosts Japan 5-3 in another Pool A tie.

India's chief coach Graham Reid was happy to start the campaign on a winning note but said there are many areas to improve ahead of Sunday's tough match.



Harmanpreet Singh celebrates with his Indian teammates after he scores a goal against New Zealand during Pool A match

@TheHockeyIndia

“Winning three points in a competition like the Olympic Games is really important. I think we had a good second and third quarter but the first and fourth we struggled a little bit,” he said.

“When we watch the video later today, we will be able to find out what we need to get better at and surely there are going to be things we learn from today

too,” he added.

INDIA WOMEN LOSE 1-5

The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly in the first two quarters before losing the team to go down 1-5 against world No 1 Netherlands in their opening pool match.

Felice Albers gave Netherlands the lead in the sixth minute before the advan-

tage was evened out by India skipper Rani Rampal in the 10th minute.

The Indians defended bravely in the first two quarters to go into the half time locked at 1-1 but the break seemed to have broken their momentum as the Dutch came out all guns blazing after the change of ends and pumped in three goals to nip any chance of an upset in the bud.

Margot van Geffen (33rd minute) restored Netherlands' lead soon after resumption before the three-time Olympic champions and reigning Silver medallist scored two goals in quick succession through Albers (43rd) and Frederique Matla (45th) to take control of the proceedings.

If that was not enough, there was more agony in store for the Indians as Caia Jacqueline van Maasakker slammed home from their sixth penalty corner in the 52nd minute.

India will play Germany in their next Pool A match on July 26.



Nagal creates history with singles win

Tokyo: Sumit Nagal on Saturday became only the third Indian tennis player to win a men's singles match at the Olympic Games and the first in 25 years, when he edged past Denis Istomin 6-4, 6-7(6), 6-4 in two hours and 34 minutes on court 10 at the Ariake Tennis Centre.

Zeeshan Ali was the first Indian to win a singles match at the 1988 Seoul Games when he beat Victor Caballero from Paraguay.

After that, the legendary Leander Paes won the historic men's singles Bronze at the 1996 Atlanta Games, beating Brazil's

Fernando Meligeni.

No Indian could win a singles match after Paes' heroic feat.

“To lose second set from 5-3 and then comeback in the third set in a weather like this, is not easy. Playing for my country gave me the push,” said Nagal after the match.

Nagal now faces a Herculean task as he takes on Australian Open runner-up Medvedev.

“I am very excited for this match to play the world number two on a big court. That's why we play tennis for, to live for these moments. I am looking forward to it,” he said.

Chirag-Satwik stun World No 3

Praneeth suffers defeat; Sindhu in action today

Tokyo: The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty shocked the world No 3 pair of Yang Lee and Chi-Lin Wang of Chinese Taipei in a thrilling group A match of the badminton competition where the country experienced disappointment in the singles' event on Saturday.

Chirag and Satwik, the current world No 10, notched up a stunning 21-16, 16-21, 27-25 win over third seeds Lee and Wang, who had claimed back-to-back titles at the Yonex Thailand Open, Toyota Thailand Open and BWF World Tour Finals in Thailand earlier this year.

However, 13th seeded B Sai Praneeth suffered a demoralising 17-21, 15-21 loss to world number 47 Misha Zilberman of Israel in a 41-minute men's singles group D match.



India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty compete against Taiwan's Lee Yang and Wang Chi Lin during their men's doubles group stage match

PTI

Satwik and Chirag, who have been working under Danish coach Mathias Boe for the last few months, dished out a tactical superior game and held their nerves in the final moments to emerge victorious during the one hour and nine minute contest, which turned out to be an edge-of-the-seat thriller.

The Indians had five

match points but the Chinese Taipei pair, the 2018 World championship Bronze-medallists, saved all of them before grabbing one themselves but Chirag and Satwik were up to the task and had the last laugh.

Satwik and Chirag will next play Indonesian world No 1s Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo on Sunday.

Injured Vikas out



Vikas Krishan stands in his corner during his men's 69-kg boxing match

AP

Tokyo: Indian boxer Vikas Krishan (69kg) was out-punched 0-5 and left with a bloodied eye by local favourite Sewonrets Quincy Mensah Okazawa as he bowed out of Olympics on Saturday after fighting with a shoulder injury in the opening round.

The 29-year-old Vikas sustained a cut below his left eye in the high-voltage clash.

“During the last sparring session in Italy (before the team left for Tokyo), he injured his shoulder. He got treatment and we had hoped that he would be

fine, he started without problem,” India's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva said.

“But when he attempted a jab at Okazawa's body, he hurt the shoulder again and could not use his left hand properly. He fought with one hand today,” the Swede added.

Vikas was the only Indian boxer in action on the day.

On Sunday, six-time world champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) and Commonwealth Games Silver-medallist Manish Kaushik will compete in their opening bouts.



Indian shooters fail to fire

Tokyo: Indian shooters endured multiple heartbreaks on the first day of their competition in the Tokyo Olympics on Saturday, with the biggest disappointment being Saurabh Chaudhary's failure to win a medal after topping the qualifications.

Chaudhary could not replicate the form he displayed in the qualifications to finish seventh in the men's 10m air pistol final.

His roommate and friend Abhishek Verma could not make the eight-man finals, settling for the 17th place with 575 in the event that was considered one of India's best bets for a

podium finish.

In the women's 10m air rifle event, first-timer Elavenil Valarivan and Apurvi Chandela, too, failed to qualify for the finals, finishing 16th and 36th respectively, at the Akasa Range.

Following his sensational entry into the finals, a lot of hope were pinned on Chaudhary after a dismal show by the women. But the script did not pan out the way the country's shooting team would have wanted it to.

The Indian ace shot 137.4 to be eliminated in the seventh place. Things were different in the qualifications though, with

Chaudhar shooting 586 to finish ahead of a world-class field, thanks to a perfect 100 in the fourth series after back-to-back 98.

Verma was also in contention to make the cut after staging an excellent rally, but two 8s in the final series dashed his hopes.

Earlier in the day, world number one Elavenil finished 16th in the qualifications after shooting 626.5 over six series of 10 shots each, while the more experienced Apurvi, who is also the finals world record holder in the event, settled for the 36th place after aggregating 621.9.

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE



Support system for rural India
If more private companies perceive rural development as a market investment, we will be able to better support our rural regions

2



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Watch your thoughts
Every individual is born with a stockpile of thought seeds in mind, coming as it may as Karmic carryover from the past

For marriage to be a success, every woman and every man should have her and his own bathroom. The end
— Catherine Zeta-Jones



Identifying a passive aggressive partner could be the first step towards curbing the hostility growing between you and your partner, writes NIDHI UPADHYAY

HOW FINE IS 'I AM FINE'?

We all use 'I am fine' as the most powerful means to avoid any potentially costly confrontations, be it with a spouse, with your colleague at work agrees with your constructive feedback in the meeting to avoid confrontation and later forgets to copy you in an important email? What if your usually punctual spouse doesn't show up on time for a dinner date simply because he or she disagreed with your choice of restaurant? And what if you have noticed a pattern in this behaviour but every time you try to bring it up with your spouse you are dismissed for reading too much between the lines?

While developing the characters for *That Night*, I accidentally stumbled upon an interesting article about passive aggression in a marriage and how sometimes what might appear like a difference of opinion on the surface could be a classical setup for passive aggressive relationship. Although the partner exhibiting such behaviour in a relationship might not be a full-fledged, card carrying passive aggressive personality, but he or she could be a member of the club, subtly abusing the partner emotionally and sometimes physically too.

According to WebMD: Passive-aggressive behaviour is when you express negative feelings indirectly instead of openly talking about them. During World War II, when soldiers wouldn't follow officers' orders, experts described them as "passive-aggressive." Someone who uses passive aggression may feel angry, resentful, or frustrated, but they act neutral, pleasant, or even cheerful. They then find indirect ways to show how they really feel.

We all might show a streak of passive aggression at times, however, when this repetitive sulking, backhanded compliment, withdrawal, or manipulation becomes a way of life, it can result into grave consequences in a relationship, especially in a marriage. Identifying a passive aggressive partner could be the first step towards curbing the hostility growing between you and your partner.

While each passive-aggressive spouse might operate differently, but they all have one thing in common: they avoid confrontation, and often these individuals appear and behave outwardly supportive or content, which makes it all the more difficult to spot them. However, identifying a behavioural pattern can serve as a key differentiator between a momentary angry acceptance and a passive aggression in a relationship.

RECOGNISING PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Below are some red flags that can help you identify a harmless sulking from a hostile one.

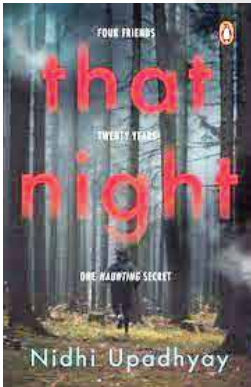
- **Disguised Verbal Hostility:** 'I'm Just Saying' a sentence that sounds so harmless can be your partner's coping mechanism developed over the years to express his or her angry feelings without being affirmative about it.

- **Disguised Hostile Humour:** 'Can't You Take a Joke?' The backhanded compliment or sarcasm could be another powerful weapon often used by a passive aggressive partner, especially in the instances when they are confronted about their demeaning act. Playing a victim card 'that it was meant to be a joke' is their knee-jerk reaction to avoid any uncomfortable conversations.
- **Guilt-Baiting:** 'You were taking so long to finish that call with your mom that I started the match instead.' Aggressive passive spouses are an expert at wielding guilt as a weapon to show their disagreement or hostility. They inadvertently or skillfully manipulate and coerce you into an agreement by attacking your vulnerable spots.
- **Disguised Psychological Manipulation:** 'I think you need to go for a yoga class to manage your stress.' Passive aggressive spouse usually have a tendency to change your perception by spinning the whole blame on you for being the inconsiderate or the short tempered one.
- **Stonewalling:** Avoiding responsibility, duty, and obligations and withdrawing from a relationship is another trick up the sleeves of these individuals. It's their way of maintaining power and control by imposing many hurdles for you to jump through.

While the phrases such as 'I am just saying,' 'It was a joke' and the silent treatment are invariably part of every marriage, it should not be a breeding ground for hostility that leaves the receiving partner shattered and confused about her or his own worth in a relationship. Unfortunately, often these tricky psychological manoeuvres take absolutely no planning on your passive-aggressive partner's part. On the contrary, they are acting on pure instincts. Hence identifying the cause for such behaviour could work as a powerful tool to stop such manoeuvres in the track.

POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- **Upbringing:** Voicing your strong opinion was(is) often categorised as disrespectful in most Indian households. However, a constant suppression of opinion during the formative years can impact adversely, pushing an individual to find ways to passively channel their anger or frustration.
- **Sense of powerlessness:** A manipulation in a marriage can often be a side-effect of tussle of power between the partners, especially when one partner feels out of control in a situation or area where his or her spouse is enjoying success. This sense of insecurity can fuel underhanded tactics to sabotage the partner's success and emotional wellbeing, sometimes without even realising it. This power hunger can also manifest into establishing their territories by subtle emotional and physical abuse.



“WHILE EACH PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE SPOUSE MIGHT OPERATE DIFFERENTLY, BUT THEY ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY AVOID CONFRONTATION, AND OFTEN THESE INDIVIDUALS APPEAR AND BEHAVE OUTWARDLY SUPPORTIVE OR CONTENT, WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT TO SPOT THEM. HOWEVER, IDENTIFYING A BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN CAN SERVE AS A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR BETWEEN A MOMENTARY ANGRY ACCEPTANCE AND A PASSIVE AGGRESSION IN A RELATIONSHIP



- **Inability to accept their own emotion:** Passive aggression is a personality disorder, and these individuals cannot approach situations, feelings, relationships or communication directly. They are often unaware of what they are doing, and when confronted, they refuse to acknowledge both the behaviour and the results.
- **Low self-esteem:** The passive-aggressive partner often feels that he or she is the one at the receiving end, inadvertently playing the victim card. These individuals often operate out of a deep sense of insecurity, and they persistently feed their negative emotions to justify their actions, sometimes to the extent of demeaning the partner in an attempt to elevate themselves.
- **Buried feelings of inadequacy and injustice:** Often words like 'it's-unfair' can be passive aggressive person's way of communicating that the spouse has some kind of unfair advantage over them in a relationship. It could be in career, relationships at work and family, or kids.

HOW TO COPE WITH PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- Once you have identified a classical pattern of passive aggression in your spouse, the most critical step is to protect your and your partner's emotional wellbeing. The following few steps can act as a crucial steppingstone in bringing your relationship back to a healthy track.
- **Accepting the situation:** It's painful to accept that your spouse is operating within a passive-aggressive pattern, especially, because these individuals have a tendency to manipulate your emotions by displaying sacrifices made by them in a relationship. They usually go an extra length to prove that their love for their spouse is unmatched. But if you notice a concrete pattern in the sugar-coated humiliation or purposeful withdrawal to punish you, it's time to trust your instincts and accept the reality.
 - **Identify the trigger:** There is no excuse for aggression and abuse of any form in a marriage. However, knowing the reason for this aggression can help you predict the behaviour pattern of your spouse. Also, sometimes the issue can be as trivial as your spouse fearing to hurt your feelings and thus, he or she inadvertently finds an underhanded way to express his or her dislike. Understanding the triggers can minimize the potential damage to your relationships.
 - **Don't justify your spouse's behaviour:** The chances are that you have been manipulated enough in a relationship by now that you tend to find flaws in you than in the spouse who appears so nice and non-confrontational. So, train yourself to stop inwardly justifying or finding excuses for your spouse's unacceptable behaviour.
 - **Stay calm and keep you anger in control:** It's essential to keep a check on your emo-

- tions, especially when the passive aggressive spouse is acting up. If you can recognise triggers of your own anger and get a control of your reactions, you are less likely to get psychologically manipulated or gaslighted by the partner.
- **Establishing a healthy channel of communication:** It is important to approach your spouse with vulnerability and empathy as passive aggressive individuals are hypersensitive and often operate from low self-esteem or sense of insecurity. You can help them by wording their angry feelings in a way that it doesn't appear judgmental yet factual. Share with your spouse how his or her behaviour hurts you but do it without placing the blame on them.
 - **Set healthy boundaries and ground rules:** It hurts deeply to accept that your spouse might not have your best interest in mind always. However, it is important to set boundaries to protect yourself from any form of emotional or physical abuse. By drawing a clear list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour might help you and your partner identify the patterns you've been experiencing. Also, setup consequences for the next time he or she does the same thing and don't back down if they demean you.
 - **Seek help of a marriage therapist:** It never hurts to seek help of a good marriage therapist. With the right approach and professional support, you can overcome passive-aggressive patterns and manipulations in a relationship to build a happier, healthier marriage together.
- However, even after repetitive efforts at your end, if your partner still believes that you are at fault, in that case, you might be forced to take the tough decision of saving yourself from any form of emotional abuse. If despite all your love and patience your partner is persistently falling back to his or her old ways of demeaning you or manipulating you, or they refuse to seek help, it's time to walk out of a relationship that is ruining you (and your partner) inside out. Because marriage should not be about turning yourself inside out, it should also be about loving yourself and defining your own worth in a relationship, and it can only happen when the boundaries about what is acceptable and not are defined clearly for both the partners. And if something unacceptable still finds its way into your marriage, time and again, despite all your efforts, perhaps walking away from a relationship would be a better idea. Because these episodes of withdrawal, aggression, abuse and manipulation are a double-edged sword that wounds you and your partner, too. So, before you fall out of love with yourself and with your partner seek help.

The writer is an engineer-turned-headhunter. *That Night*, published by Penguin, is her debut novel

STILETTOS

MINIMA
CHATTERJI



NEED TO BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR RURAL INDIA

If more private companies perceive rural development during and beyond disasters as a market investment, instead of an evangelist or missionary ad-hoc project, we will be able to better support our rural regions

With the tragic second wave of Covid-19 in India done and dusted, malls and restaurants in cities are once again thronging with customers. However, in rural India the devastating effect of Covid-19 this time round has been so grave that the mood there might take far longer to pick up.

By May 2021, one in every two cases was in India's rural areas, while states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had 75% of their cases in rural areas. Exposing the weakness of the public healthcare system, rural India only had 40% of the beds in the country even when it is home to 70% of India's population. In fact the number of hospital beds per 10000 population between 2010 and 2020 reduced from 9 to 5.

I spent much of last month leading the philanthropic effort of a consortium of partners to establish more Covid care facilities in rural parts of India. It has been challenging to raise funds for Covid relief in the second wave as charitable funds for health care in India have dried up while government regulations have clamped down on international funds coming in to the NGOs in the country.

Secondly, given the intensity of this wave, only ICU beds or at least beds equipped with oxygen concentrators were mostly needed in the second wave, pushing up the effort and cost of equipment procurement. Thirdly, many individuals and organisations including established not-for-profits were no longer contributing to the cause voluntarily but instead leveraged the desperate situation of the second wave to make a buck.

Nonetheless with the support of local NGO iBihar and its founder Anis Bari, the sustained efforts of Anant National University, besides my own firm Sustain Labs, we managed to establish 13 Covid care facilities in rural Bihar.



It is indeed easy and not incorrect to blame the government as state governments with higher expenditure on health had lower confirmed cases of Covid. However, at a time when the government has demonstrated substantial inertia in effectively managing the pandemic in the country, the civil society must (and has!) step up. With management expertise, wide distribution networks in the country, human resources at disposal, the private sector has an especially strong role to play in disaster management in rural India. Corporations hold enormous influence within their domains and communities around their factories and depots that are often located in remote or rural areas. In this context, government effectiveness in rural areas can thus be strengthened by leveraging existing private

sector capacities, reach and core competencies.

There is a need to emphasize greater market driven ways for the private sector to support rural development in India, during and beyond disasters. A balanced approach to driving market driven rural development strategies ensure that the development is sustained as stakeholders see incentives to do so. CSR funds alone, on the other hand, are undependable as it runs dry exactly at the time of socio-economic crisis such as the current pandemic, which is ironically when it is most needed.

There are at least three ways that the private sector can play a central role in managing disasters better in rural India.

First, through the investments they make and the decisions they take, companies directly impact the

THERE IS A NEED TO EMPHASIZE GREATER MARKET DRIVEN WAYS FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SUPPORT RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

world around us. Establishing markets in rural regions and offering affordable products and services to rural India is a market opportunity. For example, Visaka Industries Limited is a Hyderabad based diversified company that manufactures asbestos cement roofing sheets, building products and textile yarn, in ways that established it as a primarily green business. Further, 90% of Visaka's asbestos sheets, 30% of VBoard products, and 20% of its ATUM solar roofing are sold in rural and semi-urban parts of the country, thus enhancing the quality of life of rural communities.

Similarly, ICICI too has a substantial rural presence. 650 of ICICI's rural branches are in previously unbanked villages and which also promote entrepreneurship among women by developing

tailored financing and loan options catering to rural India. During disasters such as the ongoing pandemic, the reach and institutionalised presence of companies in these rural areas are of paramount importance for providing sustained livelihood and disaster relief to people.

Secondly, rural India still needs to be better connected to cities via roads, highways, and also telecommunications. Goods for relief work (and beyond) need to be transported by roads to villages and this becomes difficult to do if road infrastructure is inadequate. Until June this year we also saw that the vaccination distribution exclusively relied on a digital portal for booking vaccination slots for a significant population of the country, which became an impediment for India to achieve universal immu-

nisation. Ultimately on June 2, 2021, the Supreme Court asked the government to explain how the use of the CoWin app for booking slots is going to overcome the digital divide in rural and urban India, following which offline channels of vaccine booking were introduced. This again is an opportunity for the private sector to step in and build physical and digital infrastructure that connects rural India better to the rest of the country. Indeed the government needs to also prioritise the development of infrastructure projects, make approvals more efficient, besides tightening quality control.

Third, we need more public private partnerships. Disasters by themselves are beyond anyone's control. However, the preparation and response to them can be managed so that the human and economic losses can be minimised or eliminated. This is why, whereas states have the overall responsibility to drive disaster recovery and mitigation efforts it must be understood as a shared task between the government and relevant stakeholders. Currently the Indian private sector provides disaster support in a less systematic and more ad-hoc manner. Far more strategic and planned partnerships between the government and the private sector for rural development and disaster mitigation and recovery remains an area for improvement.

If more private companies perceive rural development during and beyond disasters as a market investment, instead of an evangelist or missionary ad-hoc project alone, we will be able to better support our rural regions and not lose as many lives during disasters.

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Changing demographic profiles & women

The formation and the break-up of a society determine the consequences of a radical shift in external forces. For instance, the negligible say of women in the USA before the 1800s prompted women leaders to band together to promote a new, separate women's rights movement and change the direction of Abolitionist Movement of the 1830s.

Generations upon generations, the gender equality rhetoric has filled the gap of responsibilities and rights through gradual and profound movements around the globe. However, the 21st-century demographic picture is still blurry for women, which face constant denial of individual rights and powers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the greatest peacetime disruptor of years of progress in demographics of the society, especially in India, where there only 943 females per 1000 males. Moreover, in 2020, India ranked at 189th position out of 201 countries in terms of female to male ratio. In a society where 77% of parents prefer a male child over a female, this disproportion in the gender ratio has had profound implications in the lives of an average Indian woman during the pandemic.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DIVORCE & CHILD CUSTODY

With only 66% women literate as compared to 83% men in India, the social awareness among women is at the lowest, which makes them incapable of voicing their power against domestic abuse. Indian women filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded in a similar period in the last 10 years. But even this unusual spurt is only the tip of the iceberg as 86% of women who experience domestic violence do not seek help in India. Social isolation amid the pandemic has also caused circumstances where victims and aggressors cannot separate, and there are fewer options

Closing the gender gap in digital inclusion is an urgent priority in the pandemic. This involves a special focus on women-owned enterprises under the stimulus programmers, write RAJESH MEHTA & UDDESHYA GOEL

for women to escape their conditions, especially in the rural regions.

Despite this fact, post first wave, India saw a nearly three-fold increase in cases pertaining to divorce and child custody being filed. From an average of 1,280 cases in a month, their numbers went up to it 3,480 during the lockdown. This has placed them in a situation where they have to face social denial and the increased financial burden of their child individually.

THE SECOND SHIFT AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

A study by McKinsey found mothers are more than three times as likely, compared with fathers, to meet the majority of the demands for housework and caregiving during the pandemic. In addition, they are more than one and a half times as likely as fathers to spend three or more hours per day on these activities.

This "second shift" is where women complete their day of paid work and then spend another full shift doing work at home supporting children, families and at-home tasks. This dynamic has been exacerbated by the limits and lockdowns associated with the pandemic.

Naturally, this has brought detrimental effects on the mental fitness of working women, which constitutes 21% of the total workforce in India. According to a LinkedIn survey, the pandemic is taking a toll on the emotional well-being of India's working women as 47% report they are experiencing more stress. For men, this number stood at 38%, pointing towards a disproportionate impact on women.



JOB LOSSES AND POVERTY

Female job loss rates due to Covid-19 are about 1.8 times higher than male job loss rates globally, at 5.7% versus 3.1% respectively. Moreover, 4.5% of

women's employment is at risk in the pandemic globally, compared with 3.8% of men's employment. This is because women are over-represented in industries that are likely to experience the greatest

declines because of the pandemic. These include hospitality and foodservice, retail, education and manufacturing.

As a direct consequence, the pandemic will push 96 million

people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 millions of whom are women and girls, widening the gender poverty gap.

WIDENING ENTREPRENEURIAL GAP

In India, women-owned a little over 20% of all micro, small and medium businesses compared to nearly 80% among men in FY21. The crisis has made family resources scarce for women, such as financial capital to invest in businesses or digital devices that families must now share as children's schooling has gone online. This has brought a disproportionate impact on female entrepreneurship, including women-owned microenterprises in developing countries like India

THE LOST FUTURE TALENTS

The cascading effect of pandemic-induced economic insecurity is not just the income losses but also the rippling effect of years of education denied to women and girls. Impacts on education and employment have long-lasting consequences that, if unaddressed, will reverse hard-won gains in gender equality.

According to a UNESCO estimate, a total of 11 million girls may leave school by the end of the Covid crisis; evidence from previous crises suggests that many will not return.

Lack of education and economic insecurity also increases the risk of gender-based violence. Without sufficient economic resources, women are unable to escape abusive partners and face a greater threat of sexual exploitation, trafficking and teen pregnancy.

These consequences won't disappear when the pandemic subsides: women and girls are likely to experience long-term set-

backs in workforce participation and income. The fallout will be most severe for the most vulnerable women, those who are rarely in the headlines: migrant workers, refugees, marginalised racial and ethnic groups, single-parent households, youth and the poorest of the poor.

DIRECT INTERVENTIONS

The challenge is huge but the cause is even gargantuan. Direct interventions are needed to draw an inflection point in the current demographic status to bring a fundamental change down the line. This mandates addressing attitudinal biases. Any drive toward gender parity arguably starts with efforts to change entrenched, widespread attitudes about women's role in society. This is an extremely difficult and complex challenge that will require all stakeholders to play a sustained part over the long term.

Addressing unpaid child care cannot be overstated. There is an immediate requirement of reducing the gender imbalance in responsibility for care. This involves employer- or state-funded provision of childcare or tax policies that encourage both spouses to work and a professionalised childcare industry, with public-financing support to enable women to work and create employment for others

Interventions are also required to address digital and financial inclusion. Closing the gender gap in digital inclusion is an urgent priority in the pandemic. This involves a special focus on women-owned enterprises under the stimulus programmers. Tax burdens should be eased and where possible, governments should source food, personal protection equipment, and other essential supplies from women-led businesses.

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EdTech platforms: Same old wine in new bottle?

For a country as populated as ours, where a large section struggles to make a decent living, access to basic education still remains a privilege. However, there exists an inherent paradox where even a good percentage of the educated population find it difficult to have gainful and stable employment. So, given this paradox, how do we expect that educating the underprivileged lot will somehow help them in finding a better livelihood?

But before making an attempt to decipher the underlying code behind this paradox, we need to dig a little deeper beneath the surface to come up with an answer to this question.

Who exactly are the stakeholders that tend to benefit most out of the current education system?

All the educational institutes usually serve the purpose of signalling certain qualities like intelligence, diligence, compliance, and conformity to potential employers. As a result, there is a widespread clamour among students to get themselves validated through a paper degree as it presumably increases the chances of landing a well-paying job.

Therefore, as long as we don't find any fault in subscribing to a free market doctrine, only skills and experiences that are directly convertible to income are considered useful. As a consequence, the need for the education system to make itself sufficiently market aligned has

always managed to remain the top priority, where institutes keep thriving by serving as a certification agency. As long as both the stakeholders (students and institutes) are happy with this arrangement, the 20th-century educational ecosystem will keep haunting us even in the 21st century.

Whereas the third stakeholder (parents) doesn't seem to bother much about the present education system, primarily because they themselves are a product of that system. Besides, in India, the sense of pride associated with raising an academically exceptional child is something difficult to express in words. It is the ultimate validation to prove their worth as successful parents. It helps parents in covering every other possible flaws in their parenting. Not only that, but it also gives them a false sense of assurance that their children will eventually become an overachiever in actual life.

The false promise!

Now given this ground reality, the more we see change around this system, the more they seem to remain the same. And that seems to be true for the growth in EdTech platforms. All the changes introduced so far in the education ecosystem remind us of the earlier models of coaching centres that held a promise of a better tomorrow if you could afford their fees.

However, despite these apparent shortcomings, the



media is never tired of celebrating the success of EdTech initiatives that are nothing but a rehash of the same old wine in the shinier bottle. The content and delivery by most of these EdTech platforms are woefully dated, with a minimum collaboration, participation, and feedback from students.

Now given the widespread celebration in media, there is a temptation to accept education as a potent investment opportunity for people with deep pockets. Given the poor quality associated with most forms of public education, people, in general, have been conditioned to accept the association of good quality education at a cost. As a result, there is no dearth of institutes claiming to offer the same.

As an integral part of tar-

geting the gullible parents and students, there is a deliberate attempt from these EdTech entities with deep pockets to sell their product as something very essential for the success of students — an unsubstantiated claim sold as gospel truth.

Celebrity endorsement is another potent method to capture the attention of insecure parents. These insecure parents are made to feel guilty if they dare to deny their kids "the key to success" on financial grounds. There is a lot of unnecessary noise created in the media about the potency of their life-altering products and courses. A kid as young as 5 years is not spared from their tempting media campaigns.

Is there a way to weed out these outright commercial entities occupying the educational

space?

In the era of low-cost internet, the availability of good quality free content has never been in question. It's the concomitant contextual understanding and subsequent follow-up lectures that make the whole difference. You can't expect a student with limited working knowledge of English to comprehend a two-hour lecture by Harvard faculty on quantum physics.

So, what's the solution?

Given the kind of complexity inherent in the problem, the solution needs to incorporate the seemingly conflicting interest of different stakeholders into account. Therefore, it wouldn't make sense to come up with one size solution that fits everyone.

It's important to embrace the true potential of EdTech. It's

not just about reformatting books into pdf or teaching remotely, it's also about using tech to deliver brand-new learning architecture, opening up the world of education to new audiences, boosting student engagement, while cutting costs to improve access for all.

There is no denying that the pre-university generation is digital natives; they favour individual expression and personalisation to such an extent that they expect to resolve all of life's problems with the device in the palm of their hands. They don't mind being bombarded with information via social media.

Therefore, there is a need to go straight to the heart of social media, where Gen Z spends a lot of time. EdTech platforms need to find a way to

cut through the noise and reach students across the social divides who could be given the needed support.

In the name of online classes whatever is being done with books and whiteboard can merely be termed as a good start especially for visual learners, but can't be termed as a technological revolution in the education space by any stretch of the imagination. Because a forward-looking twenty-first-century education envisages more than exposing students to audio-visual content. Here every learner is expected to collaborate, communicate, be creative and think critically to solve problems!

We need to prepare students to work in teams, exchange ideas with peers who may be in different geographies. The students are expected to find solutions by thinking out of the box with the world of information at their fingertips. We need to outgrow the mentality of spoon-feeding, and allow children to learn for themselves and be there to support them as a facilitator.

Till we succeed in bringing these much-needed changes within the existing ecosystem, the promise of gaining a better livelihood after going through the pain of years of formal education will eventually turn out to be a hollow one.

(The writer is an educator, former IRS officer & author of upcoming book "The Current Perspective on INDIAN ECONOMY.")

Do we actually need them? The content and delivery by most of these EdTech platforms are woefully dated, with a minimum collaboration, participation, and feedback from students. EdTech platforms need to find a way to cut through the noise and reach students across the social divide



PIYUSH KAMAL

PERSPECTIVE

South Sudan — A decade of Independence

This month South Sudan is celebrating its first decade of Independence, but there is not much to rejoice. Since its separation from mainland Sudan, it has been experiencing continued violence, endemic corruption, poverty and underdevelopment. However, the 10th anniversary of country's historic achievement of Independence provides an opportunity to inject fresh initiatives to the ongoing peace process



MAKHAN SAIKIA

South Sudan became the world's youngest nation on July 9, 2011. The birth of the Republic of South Sudan was the culmination of six years of peace process that began with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. With the signing of the CPA, the war between the South and the North Sudan came to an end and the peace deal, known as the Naivasha Agreement between Khartoum Central Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M), led to a historic referendum which took place in Southern Sudan between January 9 and 15 in 2011.

The main purpose of the referendum was to decide whether the region should continue to remain a part of Sudan or become independent. However, a simultaneous referendum that was supposed to be held in the Abyei region on whether to join South Sudan could not take place due to massive violence. The Referendum Commission published the results of the referendum on February 7, 2011, which showed more than 98.83 per cent people voted in favour of separation from the mainland Sudan.

South Sudan's partition from Sudan was predicted long ago. Interestingly, this part of Sudan was experiencing unrest for nearly six decades before its Independence. Omar al-Bashir, then President of Sudan and a former army veteran, who ruled the country from 1989 to 2019, indeed talked about the right of South Sudan to secede from the mainland. Once a powerful strongman who ruled one of Africa's largest nations with an iron fist, Bashir commented that the referendum for South Sudan was helpful as he believed "unity could not be forced by power". However, then he was of the opinion that secession was not the answer for bringing an end to the myriad of problems of South Sudan. He had said, "The stability of the South is very important to us because any instability in the South will have an impact on the north...The

South suffers from many problems. It's been at war since 1959. The South does not have the ability to provide for its citizens or create a state or authority".

The brutal man, who ruled his country for three decades and having the scar of carrying genocide in Darfur, almost turned his words prophetic over the newly independent South Sudan. As of this date, Juba is fervently struggling for peace, stability and unity.

This month the country is celebrating its first decade of Independence, but there is not much to rejoice. Since its separation from mainland Sudan, it has been experiencing continued violence, endemic corruption, poverty and underdevelopment. South Sudan is located in the northern and eastern hemisphere of the planet earth. It is bordered by six other African nations — Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya to the south-east, Uganda to the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo to the south-west and Central African Republic to the west. The country has been undergoing a number of significant changes since 2011. At its birth, South Sudan had only 10 provincial States, but in 2015, it was divided into 15. In 2017, the country was further made into 32 provinces purely based on ethnic lines. However, after three years of running a troubled Government and signing of a peace treaty in February 2020, the South Sudanese Civil War came to an end. And with this, Juba decided to roll back the ethnic divisions of States created in 2017 and reverted to the earlier system of 10 States.

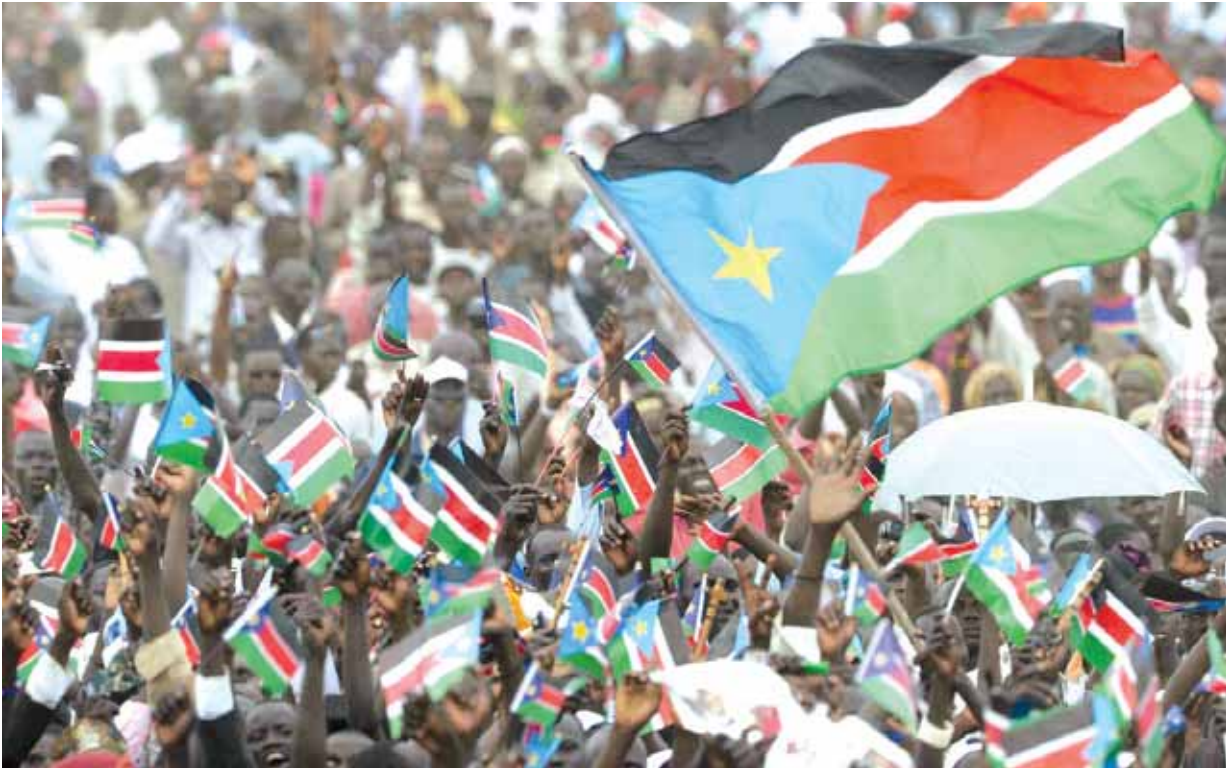
How the Civil War began in South Sudan? The two titans — Salva Kiir, the President, and Riek Machar, the former Vice President, were fighting to claim their rights over the fragile nation. This conflict started just after two years of the country's Independence from the mainland Sudan. The vast majority (over 80 per cent) of the people fleeing South Sudan in the past are women and children. And sadly, children make up to the 63 per cent of the total South Sudanese refugees during the

country's recent Civil War that lasted between December 15, 2013 and February 22, 2020, covering a period of nearly six years, two months and one week. Since the Civil War erupted, nearly 400,000 people have been killed and over 2.3 million became refugees and asylum seekers.

In November 2013, President Kiir, from the Dinka ethnic group, dismissed Machar who belonged to the Nuer group of South Sudan. Following the rumours of a possible coup, the President immediately replaced the members of the Army and the Government. He added fuel to the fire by dismissing all the main organs of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), citing that their time in office had expired. Further, massive violence sparked between the armed groups of Kiir and Machar, when the President accused the latter of plotting a coup against him in December 2013. Gradually, the violence took an ethnic turn by dividing and arming militias and villagers belonging to the Dinka and Nuer groups. There have also been allegations by both sides of crimes against humanity, including rape, extra-judicial killings, abductions, torture and the use of child soldiers in the war.

How has the UN responded to the crisis so far? As large swaths of South Sudan are facing violence against civilians, particularly children and women, the UN peacekeeping mission in the country known as United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) is establishing a number of camps to protect the victims. Nicholas Haysom, the UN Secretary General's

Special Representative for South Sudan briefed the UN Security Council about the current situation on June 21, 2021. In his briefing he said: "I would like to highlight the pervasive insecurity, in particular inter-communal violence, which continues to obstruct the realisation of a durable and sustainable peace in South Sudan. This year more than 80 per cent of the civilian casualties were attributed to inter-com-



munal violence and community-based militias". Therefore, the UNMISS has a turbulent road ahead in South Sudan.

What is the latest peace deal? On September 12, 2018, President Kiir and Vice-President-turned rebel leader Machar signed a renewed peace agreement to put an end to the five-year long ethnic war in South Sudan. The agreement known as the Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict of the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was nothing new and indeed built upon a previous peace deal signed by both the leaders. It's a renewed peace process as both these rebels have come across a number of negotiations in the past. But then all of them failed as both the parties keep violating the terms for strengthening their own militias. The R-ARCSS envisioned an eight-month "pre-transitional period" that focussed largely on stabilising the security situation of the country. After eight months, the agreement stipulates the starting of another eight-month "transitional period" when the country would be led by a "Unity Government" with Kiir as President and Machar as

Vice President. Needless to say, that the proposed Unity Government structure resembles the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict of the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS) signed on August 17, 2015. Even under that agreement, Machar was supposed to be appointed as the Vice President of the country. But unfortunately, the formation of that Government was delayed till April 2016 as Machar refused to travel to the Capital city, fearing for his security and life. Eventually, fierce fighting between the two groups began in the summer of 2016 in Juba and Machar had to leave as widespread violence engulfed the entire country.

A UN Report highlighted that the slow implementation of the revitalised peace accord may push the country again into a chaos. Experts on Africa say that political, ethnic and military divisions are growing across South Sudan. The parties and factions that signed the peace deal are again fighting in many places. Also, the UN says that nearly 100,000 people are facing famine like situations in the war-torn nation.

Even barely a year after signing the peace deal in 2019, South Sudan's National Security Service recruited a force of 10,000 fighters in President Kiir's stronghold. These were all apparently violating the peace accord. The Kiir administration is taking very little interest in following the terms and conditions of the deal. Sadly, an often-overlooked conflict, the South Sudanese civil war has already taken the lives of more than 400,000 people so far. Violence, disease and dire scarcity mar this land-locked country in East Central Africa even after a decade of its Independence. Women and children are largely bearing the brunt of the violence.

However, the 10th anniversary of South Sudan's historic achievement of Independence provides an opportunity to inject fresh initiatives to the ongoing peace process. The idea is to bring back peace, stability and growth that all South Sudanese people deserve today. Notwithstanding the recent signs of tranquillity, the overall implementation of the revitalised agreement is abysmally slow. Nevertheless, the feeble and almost paralysed insti-

tutions of State governance throughout South Sudan have directly helped the perpetrators of violence to exploit the existing perennial ethnic and communal cleavages. Entrenched insecurity has prevented the regular cultivation and herd rearing practices of the traditional communities in the countryside leading to food shortage and famine.

Above all, the global Covid-19 pandemic and a continued economic downturn are deteriorating the current state of affairs in South Sudan. The weakened law and order and rising criminal networks are making huge roadblocks in bringing peace back. It is time for Kiir and Machar to rebuild the newest nation of the world once again. Let Juba jubilate!

(Dr Makhan Saikia has taught political science and international relations for over a decade in institutions of national and international repute after specialisation in globalisation and governance from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. He is the chief editor of the Journal of Global Studies, an international research journal)



Lucky number 22
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Friday

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Monday

Lucky number 31
Lucky colour Red
Lucky day Wednesday

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Friday

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Watch your thoughts

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